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The Role of Undergraduate Student Affairs Coursework in Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals' Career Development

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THE ROLE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AFFAIRS COURSEWORK IN ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT

by

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THE ROLE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AFFAIRS COURSEWORK IN ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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University of Nebraska, 2020

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This qualitative, single case study explored the influence of an undergraduate introductory student affairs course (SA 101) on the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. Using Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory, the study was guided by the following questions: (1) How did SA 101 contribute to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs? (2) In what ways did this course assist students in the development of self-efficacy in relation to their interest in pursuing a career in student affairs? (3) To what degree did students in SA 101 describe positive outcome expectations and personal goals aligning with a career in students affairs? (4) Following SA 101, why did (or didn't) students enrolled in SA 101 pursue a master's degree in student affairs and/or a career in student affairs? Participants included the two instructors for the course, as well as six undergraduate students enrolled in the course. The case site itself was at a mid-size, public institution in the Midwest. Data collection involved document analysis, student and instructor interviews, and classroom observations throughout the duration of the course.

The findings of this study suggest undergraduate coursework in student affairs influenced student career development through growth in self-efficacy and positive

outcome expectations. This study demonstrated that career interests form when people "view themselves to be efficacious and in which they anticipate positive outcomes" (Lent et al., 1994, p. 89). These items, in turn, allowed for informed career interest exploration and decision making. This study offers implications for research and practice based on these findings.

Dedication

To my wife, Megan. Without her support, this dissertation and doctoral journey simply would not have been possible.

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Many say a dissertation is like a marathon. At times, you sprint. Other times you jog, walk, or crawl. And still other times, you stop completely in order to catch your breath. This process was a marathon. I am fortunate to have had many individuals cheering me on since the beginning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A college education can be a transformative experience (Keeling, 2004). This education provides learners power over and ownership of their future (Freire, 2012). Certainly college is an influential time in an individual's life. General education and discipline-specific coursework provides students the foundation on which to build their future. Through coursework, students study concepts, explore topics familiar and foreign, and process, reflect, and discuss how such material influences their daily lives, their attitudes and worldviews, as well as their future career (Stark et al., 1990). Classroom and curricular-based high-impact practices such as undergraduate research, writing-intensive courses, and capstone projects (Kuh, 2008) are complemented by out-of-the-classroom, or co-curricular, learning experiences. While curricular learning experiences are typically the responsibility of institutional faculty, co-curricular learning experiences are primarily the responsibility of student affairs professionals at the institution (Magolda & Quaye, 2011).

Student affairs is a broad term used to define a number of departments and institutional staff who support the co-curricular mission of post-secondary education. Student affairs professionals traditionally serve in roles within academic advising units, student activities, multicultural affairs, career services, student housing, disability support services, health services, counseling center, new student orientation, fraternity and sorority life, student conduct, and others. Student affairs professionals contribute to students' experience in college and specifically assist students in their development – such as through the advancement of inter- and intrapersonal development, identity development, cultural awareness and understanding, leadership skills, communication skills, and many others (Long, 2012).

Despite its important role, scholars describe the field of student affairs as a hidden profession because many individuals simply do not realize such a profession exists until they enter college (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Many who enter the field of student affairs, therefore, share they stumbled upon the profession by accident or were shoulder-tapped to consider it as a career (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006), According to Cilente et al. (2006), roughly 15-20% of the student affairs workforce are new professionals who have been working in the field less than five years.

Attrition in Student Affairs

Given the important, yet sometimes hidden functions of the profession, it is evident that student affairs practitioners play a crucial role in college student development and learning, as well as the operation of the campus. It is concerning, then, to see longstanding research indicating that roughly half of new professionals leave the field within their first five years of employment (Holmes et al., 1983; Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). What may be more concerning are the numbers of professionals who intend to leave the field, even while still in student affairs graduate training programs. Silver and Jakeman's (2014) qualitative study of 20 student affairs master's students indicated that "half of the participants indicated they no longer planned to pursue a career in student affairs, or that they were unsure of whether they would continue in the field after graduation" (p. 171). With such a high rate of turnover, or attrition, this "revolving door syndrome" presents challenges to institutions in need of skilled professionals to aid in student success initiatives on campus (Evans, 1988, p. 19). While turnover brings new ideas and perspectives, managers who are constantly in recruiting, hiring, and training mode and not being fully staffed represent a loss of resources, efficiency, and overall quality of services deliverable to students (Davidson, 2016; Marshall, et al., 2016).

Many student affairs scholars have sought to identify the reasons for departure from the field. Such reasons are well-published, including lack of investment from supervisor, excessive work hours, and a disconnect between expectations and realities of working in student affairs (Hirt, 2006; Marshall, et al., 2016; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Tull, 2006). Marshall et al., Rosser and Javinar, and Tull's research highlighted the practical reasons for departure. The most common reasons for departure seem to indicate that earlier exposure to the field may be able assist in lowering attrition rates (Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Tull & Medrano, 2008). To best address attrition, researchers must understand not only the reasons for departure, but also the reasons that students explore and commit to the student affairs profession.

Career Exploration Entry into Student Affairs

Understanding a student's decision to pursue a career in student affairs, and more specifically one's career exploration and decision-making process, provides the opportunity to study attrition by specifically looking at career development. Attrition in the field may be mitigated if aspiring student affairs professionals are able to engage in more timely, intentional career development activities. The reality is that very little research exists that explores the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. Literature does exist on the reasons for entry into the field, but this research often leaves out the important connection to career development theory. For instance, Hunter (1992) identified several themes that aspiring student affairs professionals have shared as having influenced their decision to enter the field. Perhaps the most salient theme is based on encouragement by current student affairs practitioners. This manifests itself through intentional, one-on-one conversations, discussions about careers in general, and also some element of shoulder-tapping (Hunter, 1992). Taub and McEwen (2006) shed further light on this idea of shoulder-tapping, sharing that 265 out of 300 (88.6%) student affairs master's students from 24 institutions learned about the profession from current practitioners. This is an important aspect to consider when examining the rationale for entering the field of student affairs, as "the lives of prospective student affairs professionals are touched by people and experiences that prompt the decision to join the profession" (Hunter, 1992, p. 187).

Across the literature, it seems students interested in student affairs become aware of the profession after having been at their undergraduate institution for a few years. For instance, according to the study conducted by Taub and McEwen (2006), 46% of participants became aware of the profession during their junior or senior year. In fact, Hunter (1992) found that "most of the critical incidents," which Hunter defines as career-specific decisions, "occurred during the junior or senior year" (p. 183). This will be an important point to consider for the development of this study and who is selected to participate in the proposed study.

Other student affairs professionals in Hunter's (1992) study found their career in student affairs because of past experience working on campus in a student affairs office, and still others were called to the profession due to an overall desire to improve campus life for students. Related, Taub and McEwen (2006) shared 82.6% of up-and-coming student affairs professionals cite involvement in student activities or in a student leadership position. In fact, most in the profession presume such experiences will lead to greater knowledge, understanding, and interest in the field of student affairs (McKenzie et al., 2017). Additional themes related to career selection identified by Hunter (1992) included the more personal aspects of selecting student affairs as a profession, such as a sense of value alignment between the individual and the field and uncertainty or dissatisfaction with respect to alternative career paths.

Much of this research, however, has left out the experiences of racially minoritized students and professionals. In fact, Taub and McEwen (2006) specifically call out the need for additional research to be more inclusive and address the experiences of all. The research of Linder and Winston Simmons (2015) explored the decisions of Students of Color to enter the field of student affairs. The researchers found that Students of Color express similar reasons for entering the field of student affairs as previous studies have laid out; however, greater significance was placed on advocacy and community support for the career decisions of Students of Color (Linder & Winston Simmons, 2015). Additionally, Students of Color were more aware of the differences between espoused versus enacted commitment to social justice and issues of diversity within their institutions/employers (Linder & Winston Simmons, 2015).

The research on the reasons for entry into the field of student affairs is limited, but available, as described above. This literature provides an understanding of the types of career development and exposure activities taking place among this population (e.g. mentorship, experiential learning); however, there is little exploration in the literature that utilizes career development theory to understand the pre-entry activities of aspiring student affairs professionals. This is an important gap to address because career development theory can provide critical context for understanding career-related decisions – such as the decision to enter, stay, or leave the profession. Addressing this gap in the literature may be able to provide greater understanding to the issue of attrition in the field of student affairs.

Overall, career theory refers to a class of identity development theories that assist in understanding how individuals explore career interests and make career-related decisions. Some of the more well-known career theories include Holland's (1959) theory of vocational types, Super's (1990) self-concept theory, and Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT). For this study, SCCT was used as a way of understanding career development among aspiring student affairs professionals. In their theory, Lent et al. explored the relationship between career interest and decisions and self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Learning experiences are represented in the SCCT model as well, and are said to have an influence on career interests, educational plans, and subsequent achievement (Lent et al., 1994). As the theoretical framework for this study, SCCT provided a career development lens to understand the influence of SA 101 on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and the career decision-making process. SCCT explores the interaction between people, their behavior, and their environment. It looks at the fit between people and their profession, as fit is exactly why students enter, stay, or leave a particular profession. This is why SCCT is utilized for this study. As such, SCCT is described in much more detail in Chapter 2.

The existing literature on reasons for entry into the field of student affairs highlights an array of experiences in which exploring and/or aspiring student affairs professionals learned about the field. This familiarization is an important element to career development (Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Given the literature noted earlier, students familiarize themselves and learn about student affairs in many ways, yet each way is through co-curricular activities rather than through formal curricular activities. Nearly 70% of 300 student affairs master's students cited that they did not utilize an academic course to make any sort of student affairs career decision (Taub & McEwen, 2006). Formalized coursework is often a natural way for students to explore interests in various disciplines and tease-out career and occupational fit (Beggs et al., 2008). Student affairs, however, is rarely an undergraduate degree program.

Despite the lack of a formalized undergraduate degree in student affairs, some institutions (Bucknell University, n.d.; Colorado State University, n.d.; Indiana University, n.d.; University of Georgia, n.d.) have started to offer an introductory course in student affairs for undergraduate students. For this dissertation, I refer to these courses collectively as Student Affairs (SA) 101. Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted on the effectiveness or influence of such courses. In fact, outside of the work of McKenzie et al. (2017), little is known about these introductory courses. McKenzie et al. examined how introductory student affairs coursework informed students' decisions to enter the field of student affairs. The authors found that "undergraduates have a desire to know if HESA [higher education and student affairs] is right for them" (McKenzie et al., 2017, p. 58). McKenzie et al.'s mixed methods, longitudinal study includes some aspects of career development, but overall focuses on the influence of such a course on a student's decision to pursue the student affairs profession as specifically related to the aspects of Kolb's (as cited in McKenzie et al., 2017) experiential learning model.

As noted earlier, very few studies utilize career development theory to understand the pre-entry activities of aspiring student affairs professionals. In terms of student affairs undergraduate coursework's influence on the decision to enter the profession, McKenzie et al. (2017) provide the only analysis of this phenomenon; however, the authors do not use career development theory in their analysis. Therefore, noting this gap in the literature, the study presented and conducted in this dissertation specifically highlighted the linkages between SA 101 and career development using social cognitive career theory as a theoretical framework. An undergraduate student affairs course may be able to play a role in better informing incoming professionals and allow for career exploration and informed decision making (Marshall, et al., 2016; Richmond & Sherman, 1991). The more familiar a student is with the field, the greater their success and persistence in the profession (Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Taub & McEwen, 2006). With that in mind, this study aimed to understand the role of an undergraduate student affairs course on aspiring student affairs professionals' career development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role SA 101 has on the career development and trajectory of its students. Using Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory, this study aimed to understand the degree to which students saw alignment between the student affairs profession and their own career goals and interests, as well as how their self-efficacy and outcome expectations toward a career in student affairs changed throughout SA 101. The following questions guided this research:

1. How did SA 101 contribute to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs?
2. In what ways did this course assist students in the development of self-efficacy in relation to their interest in pursuing a career in student affairs?
3. To what degree did students in SA 101 describe positive outcome expectations and personal goals aligning with a career in students affairs?
4. Following SA 101, why did (or didn't) students enrolled in SA 101 pursue a master's degree in student affairs and/or a career in student affairs?

Definition of Terms

In order to understand the role of undergraduate student affairs coursework on aspiring student affairs professionals' career development, definitions of important terms and concepts used in this study have been provided. These terms include *student affairs field/profession*, *student affairs practitioner/professional*, *career course*, *SA 101*, and *social cognitive career theory (SCCT)*.

- *Student affairs field/profession* refers to the overarching occupational term for college staff and administrators who work to assist students in their development and provide learning opportunities outside of the college classroom. Other known names to refer to this occupation include student services, student personnel, student development, student life, and so forth (Long, 2012). Those who work in this profession are referred to as *student affairs practitioners/professionals*. These practitioners assist students in their development - such as through the advancement of their inter- and intrapersonal development, cognitive development, identity development, cultural awareness and understanding, and leadership skills (Long, 2012).
- A *career course* is a formal, academic college course in which students intentionally explore career interests and begin to make career-related decisions. Many scholars have found that such courses increase student career development competencies and career decision-making ability (Freeman et al., 2017; Fouad et al., 2016; Hansen et al., 2017; Harren, 1978; Heppner & Krause, 1979). Elements of career courses, such as small group activities, written reflections, and mentorship (Brown & Krane, 2000; Freeman et al., 2017; Thomas & McDaniel, 2004), helped form a rich learning environment for students to see themselves in certain careers. Such courses also helped students explore how their unique skills, knowledge, and identity could contribute to their field. Though there are a variety of course names, in this study, undergraduate career courses for those interested in a career in student affairs are referred to collectively as *SA 101*.

- *Social cognitive career theory (SCCT)* is used as this study's theoretical framework. As first described by Lent et al. (1994), SCCT expands Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and explores the alignment between academic major/career aspirations and personal abilities, self-efficacy, and career performance/satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 1996,). SCCT also asserts that environmental factors and learning experiences influence career interests, educational and vocational plans, and achievements (Lent et al., 2003). In essence, SCCT explores the fit between people and their profession.

Methodology

To understand how SA 101 influences career development, a single case was selected and contained multiple embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2014). The case itself was one undergraduate course section of SA 101 that focused on introducing the field of student affairs to undergraduate students. I selected case study methodology because it allowed for the in-depth discovery and analysis of one contemporary phenomenon (or one case) at a time (Yin, 2014). Spending time with one case afforded me the opportunity to give special consideration and time to understand and contextualize the rich, real-world setting of such a case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). This attention to context was an important element for a study such as this one because understanding the role of SA 101 (an emerging/contemporary trend) on a student's career development should include a rich description of the context (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This study outlined the criteria for selection of the case, an undergraduate course exploring the student affairs profession taught at Century University, a mid-size public university in the Midwest. Data were collected using three different approaches: document analysis, observations, and interviews. Analysis took place concurrently with data collection. Qualitative coding strategies served as the overarching data analysis technique used for analysis of results from this study.

Delimitations

To create this study, it is worth mentioning a few key delimitations, or choices made to bound the present study. First and foremost, through this study, I am specifically looking at student affairs/higher education coursework for undergraduate students. A course such as SA 101 is meant to serve as a general introduction to the field. One delimitation is that this study does not look at or account for undergraduate courses for specific positions within student affairs. For instance, some student affairs departments offer for-credit coursework for resident assistants, orientation leaders, and other specific student leaders on campus. These courses are outside of the scope of this study. Additionally, this study was not designed to compare students in SA 101 to those not enrolled in the course. As there is no comparison group, no conclusions can be made about the effect of such a class. Rather, the focus of the study was on the relationship between the course and the outcomes it has on the career development of the student participants.

A qualitative study finds strength in the rich voice, thorough descriptions, and context provided to illuminate the topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A quantitative study cannot replicate this level of detail. The detail, however, is only a reality because of the non-random, small sample. Criticism of the sample size is expected due to its delimitations with generalizability, particularly from those who do not understand case study methodology (Yin, 2014). In fact, it would be inappropriate to generalize based on the findings of this study. Yet, a case study's strengths come from utilizing multiple forms of data collection to triangulate data to ensure trustworthiness (Kohlbacher, 2006). In this way, researchers are able to highlight the transferability of case study research because of the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2016).

Limitations

Each of the collection methods used in the case study, however, had limitations. For example, documents used for the analysis likely contained biases and subjectivity (Yin, 2014). It is also possible that I misunderstood the author's true intent when reviewing documentation (Yin, 2014); however, this limitation was overcome by talking about and clarifying meaning during student interviews. Observations faced similar limitations. For instance, observing as part of data collection was quite time-intensive (Yin, 2014). Observations relied exclusively on the interpretations of classroom happenings through the eyes and ears of the researcher alone (Yin, 2014), though observations were corroborated through interviews after the observation period. This provided another good reason to include positionality and reflexivity in this dissertation. In addition, observations were challenging simply because of the "mechanics," such as getting all the information down quickly, accurately recording quotes from the observation, and sifting through what was and was not noteworthy (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 172). Finally, interviews were not immune to limitations either. Interviews were certainly a sacrifice of time for all involved and hinged on developing a positive rapport and trusting relationship between researcher and interviewer, as well as asking articulate but easily-understood questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is possible interview questions may have been misconstrued or misinterpreted, leading to inaccurate or inarticulate findings.

There are also limitations with respect to the theoretical framework utilized for this study. Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT) provides a foundation on which to understand career development, in particular, the interplay of self efficacy and outcome expectations on career decision making. The model can help explain career choices made under "optimal voluntary control" but may not apply if an individual is under duress, facing circumstances outside of their control, or "under conditions of limited economic or educational opportunity" (Lent et al., 1994, pp. 96, 112). Said in a roundabout way, this framework highlights a possible limitation of utilizing SCCT as this study's framework. That is, this model may not account for salient experiences students bring with them to SA 101, specifically as it relates to their own social identities, worldviews, familial situations, and so forth. Throughout this study, in particular within the data analysis, I attempted to emphasize and highlight the various person inputs, background and contextual affordances, and contextual influences present for each participant. In this way, I hope I have given voice to these unique stories.

I would be remiss if I did not also include mention of the limitations imposed on this study as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection for this case study took place from January to May 2020. In early March 2020, similar to colleges and universities around the country, Century University modified teaching and learning strategies for the remainder of the academic year. This posed challenges to data collection and also certainly influenced student learning as a result. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, I detail some of the limitations this pandemic had on the research study and its results.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the current study, specifically defining terms, highlighting the problem, and providing an overview of the proposed study. In short, this chapter provided a broad overview of the need for a more thorough understanding of the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. The literature suggests greater familiarization with an occupation through intentional career exploration will lead to greater satisfaction and persistence in one's chosen field (Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009; Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Further, SCCT as a theoretical framework provided a career development lens to understand the influence of learning experience (e.g. SA 101) on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and the career decision-making process (Lent et al., 1994). As a result of this convergence of factors, this study examined how SA 101 contributes to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs. This research is significant because it explored a new frontier in student affairs research and will now inform the way in which aspiring student affairs practitioners learns about the field. This early exposure may provide a feasible strategy to combat attrition in the field.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature related to student affairs, attrition, and career development broadly. Then, I highlight the gap in the literature with respect to career coursework in student affairs and propose the use of and explain social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) as this study's theoretical and conceptual framework. Next, in Chapter 3, I describe the case study methodology for this study, as well as the sequence of data collection and analysis using interviews, observations, and document analysis. From a micro level (the individual student participants) to a macro level (the class itself overall), Chapter 4 details the findings of this study and the salient themes which emerged from the qualitative data collection process using SCCT as a guiding framework. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of the contributions and implications of this study's results, as well as presenting the overall strengths and limitations of this case study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Many who enter the field of student affairs share they stumbled upon or were shoulder-tapped to join the profession (Hunter, 1992). As it is not typically an undergraduate degree program, the field is not well-understood, publicized, or dreamt of by undergraduate students. Most undergraduate students do not learn about the field of student affairs until their junior or senior year of college (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006). This timing is challenging, particularly when we think about the importance of career development throughout college (Fouad et al., 2016). Given these complexities to field entry (e.g. not being an undergraduate degree program, lack of knowledge of the field), it is difficult to properly expose and familiarize prospective student affairs professionals to the field. The more familiar students are with the field, the greater their success and persistence in the profession (Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Taub & McEwen, 2006). The findings from Richmond and Sherman and Taub and McEwen suggest that familiarization with the field may be one of the reasons for the high attrition rate in the student affairs profession. Nearly half of all new professionals leave student affairs within the first five years (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Most approaches to addressing attrition are related to either improving the supervisor-supervisee relationship or improving preparation for field entry (Cilente et al., 2006; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Few have intentionally investigated career development among aspiring student affairs professionals.

In this literature review, I explore the student affairs profession. A brief history of the profession itself and an overview of the problem of attrition within the field are provided. Then, I connect the existing literature on career development, in particular Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT), to the problem of student affairs attrition in order to best understand the career development of aspiring student affairs practitioners. To make this point, research and scholarship surrounding entrance into the field of student affairs is explored, as is professional training and socialization literature. This information assists in understanding the career development and the career decision making of aspiring student affairs professionals. Finally, I review research surrounding the prevalence and role of career courses in the career development process. This is done to draw connections and conclusions regarding possible career development advances resulting from a student affairs undergraduate course.

Student Affairs Profession

History of Student Affairs

Despite scholars today noting the important role student affairs practitioners play in the achievement of institutional goals (Rosser & Javinar, 2009), the idea of administrators at the college or university dedicated to outside of the classroom initiatives for students was simply not a consideration for early higher education leaders. Rather, the focus of early institutions, like Harvard College founded in 1636, was to educate young White men, with a particular emphasis on ministry and moral and spiritual development of the students (Hirt, 2006; Thelin, 2004). Since those early days at Harvard College, many aspects of collegiate life have drastically changed, student demographics (i.e. gender and racial make-up of college student populations), institutional missions to name a few. Student affairs functions existed, but were not named as such. For example, students were often housed together with the faculty leaders of the institution. While these early institutional leaders' primary responsibility was focused on teaching, we know these educators also had responsibilities for keeping order in student living quarters, serving as disciplinarians, and ensuring students were fed (Hirt, 2006). These faculty members were acting in the place of these young men's parents, or *in loco parentis*. Student affairs professionals used *in loco parentis* as a foundational principle to guide their work, "ensuring that student adhered to rules that would continue their development and encourage behaviors and values appropriate for a college-educational individual" (Dungy & Gordon, 2011, p. 67). *In loco parentis* became a prevailing philosophy in student affairs for many years; however, as Dungy and Gordon (2011) outlined, the concept has largely been discarded in favor of working collaboratively with parents to support today's college student.

The student affairs profession truly began to manifest itself in the late 19^{th} and early 20th centuries. During this time, many institutions began to charge specific administrators to serve as dean of men and dean of women – positions that eventually led to the creation of the dean of students' office. These positions were the beginnings of student affairs as we know it today and gave rise to the idea of student affairs as a profession itself (Hevel, 2016). These early student affairs leaders are credited with the professionalization of the field of student affairs. Men and women in leadership positions in the early 1900s would gather to "discuss problems that transcended campuses" (Hevel, 2016, p. 852). These gatherings led to the creation of professional organizations, including what we know today as NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher

Education. NASPA, along with its counterpart ACPA: College Student Educators International, provides important professional development, research, and advocacy for today's student affairs professionals.

Modern student affairs practice started after World War II, not long after the profession issued its first foundational document. The Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV), published in 1937, is often cited as one of the most important documents explaining the purpose and values of student affairs work. The publication of SPPV demonstrated the field's appreciation of the uniqueness of each student and expressed the need to care and attend to the whole person, not just limited to classroom needs. Around this same time, the profession witnessed the demise of *in loco parentis* and the development of more functional areas and departments within the field, including new student orientation, leadership development programs, and offices to serve specific student populations (Hirt, 2006).

Today, student affairs is a robust field, with diverse practitioners serving students in curricular and co-curricular ways. At the heart of student affairs work is the desire to help college students find success. In that spirit, student affairs professionals are being increasingly looked-to to provide services for students on campus. It can be demanding, stressful – yet rewarding and meaningful work. The field itself it not without its challenges. In fact, one of the more prominent challenges for the student affairs field is its alarmingly high-rate of attrition, or departure, from the profession. The following sections explore the rate of attrition in the field, its reasons, and research relevant to exploration of this topic.

Attrition in Student Affairs

Attrition in student affairs is not a new phenomenon. Student affairs attrition literature dates back to the 1970s and 1980s (Burns, 1982; Evans, 1988; Frank, 2013; Holmes et al., 1983 Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). In fact, several sources report concerning attrition rates, despite respondents reporting overall job satisfaction and high confidence in their career choice (Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Taub & McEwen, 2006). The literature in this area also includes important details on attrition in the field, with particular focus on new professionals. New professionals play an important role in the field of student affairs; these individuals make up about 15-20% of the student affairs workforce (Cilente et al., 2006). Though studies differ on the exact attrition rate, most sources agree that roughly half of new professionals leave the field within their first five years of employment (Holmes et al., 1983; Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). A review of the literature suggests the most common reasons for departure from the field include limited promotional opportunities (Buchanan & Shupp, 2016; Evans, 1988; Marshall, et al., 2016; Rosser & Javinar, 2003), compensation concerns (Buchanan & Shupp, 2016; Magolda & Carnaghi, 2004; Marshall, et al., 2016; Silver & Jakeman, 2014), stress and burnout (Magolda & Carnaghi, 2004; Marshall, et al., 2016; Silver & Jakeman, 2014), and feeling under-appreciated (Magolda & Carnaghi, 2004; Silver & Jakeman, 2014).

The reasons for departure noted above indicate that incoming professionals must be better informed and educated on the profession itself. In their qualitative study of 20 student affairs master's students, Silver and Jakeman (2014) found a need to "advocate for measures to ensure students enrolling in graduate preparation programs are aware of the nature of student affairs work" (p. 179). While greater familiarization with the profession cannot alleviate all of these concerns, scholars do suggest there is an overall disconnect between expectations and realities of working in student affairs and that this reality plays a role in attrition (Hirt, 2006; Silver & Jakeman, 2014). Exploring the notion that new professionals in student affairs leave the field because of a disconnect between expectations and realities of the job is an important extension of the literature to review, as it speaks to an issue in the exposure and preparation of incoming professionals and a larger conversation about career development. Silver and Jakeman found that incoming professionals' perceptions of student affairs formed during their undergraduate years. This, paired with the attrition literature, indicate a disconnect exists between expectations formed during the career development process and the occupational realities of student affairs work. Further, the authors noted that "possessing familiarity with the realities of work in student affairs could support students by providing a foundation upon which to build their sense of ontological security" (Silver & Jakeman, 2014, p. 179). Given these complexities, career development of aspiring student affairs practitioners provide insight to the attrition rates within the profession.

Career Development

One way to understand attrition in student affairs is to understand the career development process for entering professionals (Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009). There is an extensive body of literature, theory, and empirical research that highlights career development, specifically among college students. Career development is of particular importance to consider for the college student population, as making career-related decision is perhaps the largest, most important, and most challenging task faced by late adolescents (Kunnen, 2013; Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010; Fouad et al., 2016). For this study in particular, career development theory is an important element to consider because it assists in the understanding of career development among student affairs professionals – and therefore, it can also help in understanding issues of career persistence and attrition.

Paramount to the study of career development is how individuals arrive at the career, occupation, or vocation they will ultimately pursue. Career theories, while diverse in specifics, are similar in scope – all relate to an individual's occupational exploration, decision, and commitment. Scholars such as Blustein et al. (1995) defined career exploration as the reflective process an individual embarks upon in order to seek out educational and career-related options in order to make career-related decisions. Developmental theory assists in our understanding of how individuals explore careers and ultimately how they make such an important decision, including how their identity fits with their chosen path, the factors they consider during exploration, their degree of confidence in their success within their chosen field, and much more.

The career development of student affairs professionals can be best understood through application of career development theories. For example, the theory of work adjustment highlights the congruence sought between people and their work environment. Scholars Dawis and Lofquist (1984) noted that individuals seek out work environments (and work environments seek out individuals) that match their required occupational or organizational needs. This might include salary and benefits, but also relates to individuals finding professions and places of employment that share their personal values. Congruence of values has proven to yield greater satisfaction and persistence (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Taub & McEwen, 2006).

Using Dawis and Lofquist's career theory in the context of student affairs, it is evident this theory's concepts may be at play in the career development of student affairs professionals. Namely, this idea of person-environment fit and value congruence seems to match well with the desire of new professionals in student affairs to see their personal values match with the profession's values (Taub & McEwen, 2006). It also speaks to the incongruence currently experienced by some student affairs professionals, since many note and an overall disconnect between expectations and realities of working in the field (Hirt, 2006; Silver & Jakeman, 2014).

Similarly, theorist John Krumboltz suggested a social learning theory related to career selection. In this theory, Krumboltz (1976) shared that environmental conditions and events, as well as learning experiences, have a role to play in career selection. Social, cultural, political, and economic realities, but also previous positive and negative learning experiences, serve as factors at play for career selection. These elements align seamlessly with the reasons for departure noted in the student affairs attrition literature. For instance, the disconnect between expectations and realities of the field, as cited in Hirt (2006) and Silver and Jakeman (2014), supports this notion of learning experiences in career development. Without the experiences in the field, aspiring practitioners do not have the necessary information to properly discern whether student affairs is the right career path for them.

The career development theories proposed by Dawis and Lofquist (1984) and Krumboltz (1976) are two small examples of career theory at work. There are many others, including Holland's (1959) theory of vocational types, Super's (1990) self-concept theory, and Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT). Each provide important research and insight into the career interest and selection process and each could be used in effort to understand the career development of student affairs practitioners. However, of all the career theories, SCCT provides the most robust framework to apply to the problem of student affairs attrition. The following sections will define SCCT and attempt to draw connections specifically to the literature surrounding student affairs career development.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

As first described by Lent et al. (1994), social cognitive career theory (SCCT) expanded Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and explores the congruence between academic major/career aspirations and personal abilities, self-efficacy, and career performance/satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 1996). Lent et al. attempted to complement and unify existing career theories, as well as introduce important contextual variables to career development. SCCT also asserts that environmental factors and learning experiences influence career interests, educational and vocational plans, and achievements (Lent et al., 2003). In essence, SCCT explores the interaction between people, their behavior, and their environment. It looks at the fit between people and their profession, as fit is exactly why students enter, stay, or leave a particular profession.

Sociocognitive Mechanisms

SCCT first appeared in the literature in 1994 with a monograph published by Lent et al. (1994). In this publication, the authors outline SCCT using three different models and outline several of their predictions and hypotheses. These models and predictions are based on three key sociocognitive mechanisms used throughout the theory. The three variables are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals.

Self-Efficacy. Lent et al. (1994) spent a great deal of time exploring self-efficacy in the SCCT framework. The term, however, is not new to the career development scene. In fact, self-efficacy has been used throughout the literature in other theories, namely in psychology through the work of Arthur Bandura. As defined by Bandura (1986), self-efficacy refers to “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (p. 391). Lent et al. (1994) frequently cited Bandura’s work with respect to self-efficacy as a basis for their SCCT model. In fact, SCCT is an extension of Bandura’s social cognitive theory with one key distinction. Lent et al. used Bandura’s work as a springboard in effort to specifically explore social cognitive theory with a career lens, an extension absent from Bandura’s theory.

In essence, self-efficacy asks the question, “can I do this?” (Lent et al., 1994). To answer this question, individuals seek information from various sources, including past personal performance, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and emotional arousal

(Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Lent et al., 1994). While past personal performance has been cited as the most influential of these elements (Lent & Brown, 1996), self-efficacy as a whole is a dynamic variable that plays a critical role in career interest and ultimately career selection. Many of SCCT's hypotheses relate to self-efficacy. Based on previous literature, Lent et al. hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between self-efficacy and vocational interests and that self-efficacy would affect career choice goals and actions.

Outcome Expectations. Outcome expectations tend to ask the question, "if I do this, what will happen?" (Lent et al., 1994). These outcome expectations are typically formed by past experiences and second-hand information from peers and other sources (Lent & Brown, 1996). In short, people tend to base decisions on their ability to do something and their ability to see a favorable outcome as a result of their abilities. Outcome expectations represent another important variable in the SCCT model. Several of the propositions and hypotheses for SCCT also relate to outcome expectations. For instance, one such hypothesis suggested there would be a positive relationship between vocational interests and positive outcome expectations, and an inverse relationship between vocational interests and negative outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994). Similarly, the authors suggest outcome expectations affect career choice goals and actions directly and indirectly.

Personal Goals. Goal setting is also included in the models presented by Lent et al. (1994). Personal goals provide organization and guidance to individuals as they seek to solidify career arrangements. In addition, goals provide behavioral motivation to seek out and achieve desired outcomes in the future. Personal goals are involved in this model because they can help implicitly sustain career choice over a longer period of time. The interplay of self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations, according to Lent et al., can cultivate personal career goals bidirectionally. Lent et al. theorized that individuals seek out occupations consistent with their goals, so long as they are committed to such goals and that these goals are clear and specific.

These three sociocognitive elements “work together to help individuals exercise personal agency and become self-directed, especially with their career decision-marking and career development” (Albert & Luzzo, 1999, p. 432). Cunningham et al. (2005) and Kaminsky and Behrend (2015) drove this point home, sharing that career interests develop as a result of the SCCT framework because if an individual believes they can perform tasks associated with a particular career and find success, they are more likely to have an interest in that career field.

Proposed Theoretical Models

In addition to the three overarching sociocognitive mechanisms described in SCCT, Lent et al. (1994) outlined three proposed models within their theory for understanding career interest development, career choice, and career-related performance (Lent & Brown, 1996). Each model contains variables for self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals.

Overview. The first model, the model of interest development, discusses the variables at play as individuals explore their career-related interests. The model seeks to understand the process by which individuals identify their personal career interests, the role of self-efficacy and outcome expectations, as well as the role of occupation-related activities that serve to reinforce or dissuade the individual from continued exploration of such a vocation. The second model, the model of career choice, expands the first model in order to take career interests and formulate real-world career decisions. In addition, this second model includes personal and contextual variables, as well as relevant learning experiences that influence career selection. The final model, the model of performance, relates primarily to measures of career performance achievements. Lent et al.'s theory posited self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals all play a direct role on an individual's academic and career performance.

All three models highlight important theoretical concepts and assertions for the expansion of career developmental theory; however, most germane to this particular study and literature review is the second model proposed regarding career choice. This second model is an expansion of the first model and incorporates elements of the third, which is why this second model, the model of career choice, will be examined more thoroughly.

Model of Career Choice. The model of career choice, as displayed in Figure 1, outlines the theory's propositions with respect to how an individual actually makes a career choice or decision to enter a particular vocation or career path. In this model, Lent et al. (1994) discussed the influence of career-related activities, observations, and modeling and feedback of career behavior from important individuals in that person's life. This second model builds upon the first and incorporates many of the same variables,

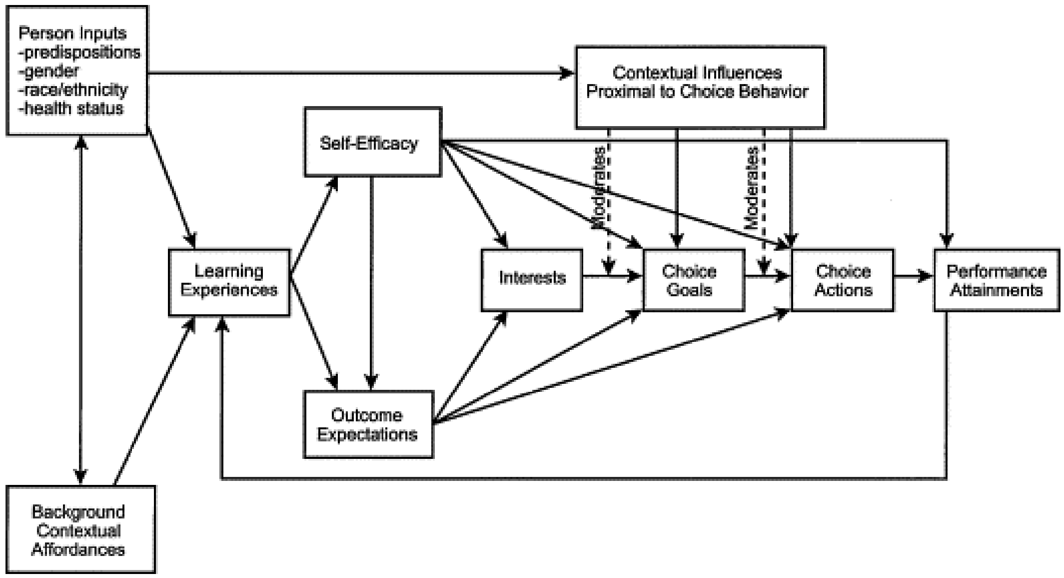

Figure 1. SCCT model of career choice (Lent et al., 1994). Reprinted with permission.

yet includes several key additions such as personal and contextual factors, as well as learning experiences.

Lent et al. (1994) began their model explanation with two variables: self-efficacy and outcome expectations. These two areas "jointly give rise to [career] interests" and indirectly influence many other variables in the model (Lent et al., 1994, p. 95). These influences initially formulate a person's efficacy and expectations for certain career-related tasks. As Lent et al. posited, "people form enduring interests in activities in which they view themselves to be efficacious and in which they anticipate positive outcomes" (p. 89). Therefore, self-efficacy and outcome expectations feed career interest and ultimately career choice. Interests, in turn, influence choice goals, or career choice intentions. Lent et al. described choice goals as the "intention to engage in a particular action or series of actions" (p. 94). Choice goals highlight one's intentions, plans, and aspirations to engage in a particular career direction. The authors noted the need to be clear and specific with such goals. For instance, an individual may have a choice goal to work with students in an educational setting. Greater specificity may include specific populations of students to work with (early childhood education, middle school, high school, postsecondary/college students).

Choice goals inform choice actions, another variable in the model. Choice actions are the actual steps taken to implement the career choice selection. Selecting a major is a good example of a choice action, as is applying for entrance into a program of study or graduate school. The results of these actions are known as performance attainments within Lent et al.'s (1994) model. Such performance attainments describe the outcomes of the actions taken. These could be successes, set-backs, or failures. An example might be acceptance into a graduate school program or, on the other side, failure of a course required for graduation in an individual's major field of study. Performance attainments support or weaken self-efficacy and outcome expectations, and by extension, ultimately influence career choice persistence (Lent et al., 1994, p. 95). Overtime, these actual experiences influence one's self-efficacy and outcome expectations and have a direct influence on career development.

Central to Lent et al.'s (1994) model of career choice is this notion of learning experiences, as well as personal and contextual variables also contributing to career decision making. These elements are represented on the far left of Figure 1. This placement, as well as the directional arrows, indicate self-efficacy and outcome expectations derive from personal inputs, background contextual affordances, and learning experiences.

Person Inputs. Lent et al. (1994) included gender, race, and heritable attributes in their SCCT model for career choice. These elements, as noted by Lent et al., have "profound psychological and social significance...not from their physical presence per se, but rather from the characteristic reactions they may evoke from the social/cultural environment...and academic and career behavior" (p. 104). The authors acknowledge that gender and race are social constructs, yet these personal attributes, whether self-claimed or socially bestowed, shape career development by virtue of exposure, opportunities, and experiences. The model, as depicted in Figure 1, also notes predispositions and health status as person inputs, though the authors did not discuss these in their SCCT framework.

Background Contextual Affordances. The model also includes background contextual affordances. Similar to person inputs, background contextual affordances have a direct influence on learning experiences. Lent et al. (1994) described such affordances as personal expectations and performance standards that can enhance or impede career development. This may include perceptions of supports, opportunities, and barriers to career choice. Such variables may be more "distal, background influences," whereas others may be more "proximal influences" (Lent et al., 1994, p. 107). Distal influences that precede career interest and choice, according to Lent et al., could include exposure to career-relevant opportunities or mentors, financial support to engage in exploration, socialization based on gender, race, or ability. Proximal influences related to career interest in choice may also include exposure to career-relevant opportunities or mentors, network of role models, and perceived supports and barriers (Lent et al., 1994). Some of these variables are both distal and proximal, and are therefore ever-present (e.g. influence of family). In all, these contextual factors “help shape the learning experiences that fuel personal interests and choices” (Lent et al., 1994, p. 107).

Learning Experiences. Lent et al. (1994) highlighted experiential sources that inform self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The authors suggest two propositions within the SCCT framework related to learning experiences. First, self-efficacy is derived from past personal performance, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological reactions (Lent et al., 1994). The second proposition proposed states that outcome expectations derive from “direct and vicarious learning experiences with educational and occupationally relevant activities” (Lent et al., 1994, p. 103). In this way, outcome expectations give individuals an idea of what the results will be if they choose to engage in a particular career decision (i.e. successes and disappointments). These propositions identify areas of experiential learning that influence self-efficacy and outcome expectations – and indirectly on career interest and choice. Though well-structured learning experiences influence career development by way of self-efficacy and outcome expectations, Lent et al. noted the need for further inquiry on learning experiences.

Overall, as highlighted in Figure 1, the model proposed by Lent et al. (1994) is cyclical in nature. This is because career choices are not static. The process can repeat itself until career choice and interests begin to stabilize. One stabilized, “it may take very compelling experiences to provoke a fundamental reappraisal of career self-efficacy and outcome beliefs and, hence, a change in basic interest patterns" (p. 89). It is worth noting that the models proposed by Lent et al. can explain career paths people select under "optimal voluntary control" conditions but may not apply if an individual is under duress or facing circumstances outside of their control (p. 96). This notion was explored earlier as a limitation highlighted in Chapter 1.

Research Examples Using SCCT

There are numerous examples of SCCT being used in research on career development. The majority of SCCT-related studies are quantitative in nature, while some are mixed-methods. Some studies focus on students in high school (Robinson Bounds, 2013), while other devote attention to SCCT with college students (Cunningham et al., 2005; Raque-Bogdan & Lucas, 2016). Others focus simply on testing the models proposed (Lent et al., 1994; Mills, 2009) and still others focus on specific elements of the theory (Conklin et al., 2013; Cunningham et al., 2005). While not exhaustive, this section summarizes four different studies that provide context and understanding of how SCCT has been used in previous research on career development.

Use of Personal and Contextual Variables. Raque-Bogdan and Lucas (2016) utilized SCCT as a theoretical framework to explore the career development of first-generation college students. Of particular interest to Raque-Bogdan and Lucas was SCCT's inclusion of personal and contextual variables. Citing the literature around first-generation students, the authors noted the need to include socio-economic status (SES) and parental support as variables to include in their SCCT study. Raque-Bogdan and Lucas surveyed over 2,100 incoming undergraduate students at a mid-Atlantic university.

This 200-question survey explored contextual factors such as SES and parental involvement, as well as career aspirations. Using MANOVAs and hierarchical regressions, the results of Raque-Bogdan and Lucas's study indicate the importance of self-efficacy and outcome expectations for first-generation college students. The study supports SCCT as a theoretical construct offering "an empirically supported explanation for the contextual forces that can powerfully influence the career process" (p. 260).

Academic Major and SCCT. Conklin et al. (2013) explored the role of academic major in career development and career self-efficacy using SCCT. In their study of 200 undergraduate students at a college in the mid-Atlantic, Conklin et al. found that there was a relationship between major selection and career decision self-efficacy. The authors found and noted the "importance of having an emotional basis for identifying with a major in order to increase career decision self-efficacy and develop positive career expectations" (Conklin et al., 2013, p. 79). Further, Conklin et al. shared that student affairs practitioners ought to assist students in selecting major-specific courses and experiences where they are enthusiastic, can see themselves succeeding, and get a true sense for the requirements of such a major or career field. These ideas align well with SCCT with respect to the person-environment fit and the theory of work adjustment, both of which speak to this particular notion.

Exploration of Learning Experiences. Schaub and Tokar (2005) spend time investigating the role of learning experience in relation to the framework of SCCT. The authors noted the lack of research in this area, and how the few studies on learning experiences seem to generally focus on career fields and learning experiences in mathematics. The purpose of Schuab and Tokar's study was "to extend the research on SCCT by examining how personality relates to vocational interests and the extent to which self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations derive from relevant learning experiences" (pp. 308-309). Participants of this study were 327 college students enrolled at a private university in the mid-Atlantic, representing a broad array of academic majors (55 different majors), age ranges, and ethnicities. The researchers had these students complete several different questionnaires/inventories tools in order to measure personality, learning experience exposure, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and overall vocational interests. Overall, findings of Schaub and Tokar's study show direct and indirect relationship between personality and vocational interest. In addition, and perhaps more salient for purposes of this study, this study supported two of Lent et al.'s SCCT hypotheses in relation to learning experiences, specifically Hypotheses 10A and 11A, both of which postulate that learning experiences will be positively related to self-efficacy and outcome expectation. Schaub and Tokar's work "suggest that occupationally relevant learning experiences inform anticipated outcomes….through their effect on the self-efficacy beliefs from those same experiences" (p. 322). This study demonstrates the powerful nature of learning experiences in the SCCT model, yet still does not provide much by way of concrete examples of positive career-related learning interventions.

Role of Self-Efficacy and Outcome Expectations. Using SCCT to explore student intention to enter the sport and leisure field, Cunningham et al. (2005) recruited nearly 200 undergraduate participants across four U.S. universities to participate in their study. The survey utilized covered the main elements of SCCT (i.e. self-efficacy, outcome expectations) and also examined contextual variables such as barriers and supports to career choice. Some examples of the questions asked include “I am capable of learning the skills needed for a job in the sport/leisure industry,” “I intend to enter the sport/leisure industry following graduation,” and “it is possible I will be treated differently within the sport/leisure industry because of my demographics (e.g. age, sex, race)” (pp. 127-128). To analyze their data, the authors used confirmatory factor and path analysis procedures. Cunningham et al.’s results affirm SCCT concepts, namely that self-efficacy and outcome expectations have a positive relationship with career interests and goals. Their study also show interests and choice goals as distinct, yet highly-correlated concepts. As the authors state, “students may profess an interest…but still remain lost between that interest and subsequent choice goals” (p. 134). Cunningham et al. go on to stress the importance of faculty and staff members to help students come to understand the link between the two concepts.

Career Development for Student Affairs Professionals

SCCT is about the fit between people and their chosen profession, with particular attention given to one’s confidence in making a career decision. SCCT explains “individual variability in career interest, choice, and performance…and may also offer some useful implications for designing development, preventive, and remedial career interventions” (Lent & Brown, 1996, p. 7). Particularly given this comment and in light of the previous research described above, SCCT provides a useful career development framework, highlighting salient considerations and variables that influence career interest and choice. Said another way, SCCT provides a framework to understand career development, specifically career choice. Applying SCCT to the career development of student affairs professions is one mechanism to understand the problem of attrition in the field of student affairs. In order to use SCCT in this way, a review of the existing literature on learning experiences associated with student affairs career entry, including entrance into and training in the profession, will be explored.

Entrance into the Field of Student Affairs

Many scholars describe the unique nature of the student affairs profession. In many ways, it is a hidden profession because so few individuals are aware of the field as a career possibility (Linder & Winston Simmons, 2015; Richmond & Sherman, 1991). Unlike other occupations, individuals do not grow up seeing student affairs practitioners portrayed in the media or dream about working with college students outside of the classroom. Since career development is closely tied to identity formation and self-concept from a young age (Erikson, 1968), this is an important note when considering entry into student affairs work (Magolda & Carnaghi, 2004). Many individuals simply do not realize such a profession exists until they enter college as students and are in their junior or senior year (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006). In short, people “cannot aspire to a career not known to them;” this complicates truly understanding how individuals come to an awareness and interest in this profession (Hunter, 1992, p. 182).

Given these realities, there is no clear path to entry into the field of student affairs. Unlike other professions, such as law or medicine, there is no pre-student affairs track for undergraduate students (Hunter, 1992). As Hirschy et al. (2015) shared, “with no single agreed-on standard for entering the field….diverse pathways exist” (p. 777). For instance, in her dissertation work, Samuda Byard (2016) explored the preparedness of new student affairs professionals. All thirteen participants in Samuda Byard's qualitative study "revealed that student affairs was not their intended profession" (p. 82). Similarly, Simpkins (2004) discussed his calling to explore student affairs despite his academic major and studies in the department of English. Those who enter the field do so following their undergraduate career, in which they graduate with a baccalaureate degree in a sometimes-unrelated discipline of their choice. Most are encouraged to pursue graduate studies in higher education or student affairs, yet some enter directly into the student affairs workforce without graduate training (Hirschy et al., 2015). In the end, most enter the field of student affairs by happenstance, with sentiments like "student affairs found me" (Samuda Byard, 2016, p. 82).

Given the hidden nature of the field, it is imperative to understand how prospective student affairs practitioners gain exposure to the field. This exposure, or familiarization, is critical to the development of career interest and subsequently career choice as outlined in SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). Hunter (1992) and Taub and McEwen (2006) found that it may not be until a student's junior or senior year of college that then-prospective student affairs professionals recognize the possibility of a career in student affairs. This realization is often "marked by accompanying dissatisfaction with career options in students' major fields of study" (Hunter, 1992, p. 183). There are certainly many accounts – both in the literature and anecdotally – that describe exposure to the profession and subsequent entry as pure happenstance (Hunter, 1992). Most important, however, is the role mentors and critical incidents played on an individual's desire to enter this profession.

The literature surrounding how individuals made their decision to enter the field of student affairs consistently mentions the important role of mentorship (Hunter, 1992; Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Simpkins, 2004; Taub & McEwen, 2006; Tull et al., 2009). Specifically, encouragement by mentors already in the field had a profound impact on students' exposure to and interest in the field of student affairs. Viewed through SCCT, such encouragement could be considered a contextual determinant; depending on the timing and the influence, such a mentor could be considered a distal or a proximal variable as described earlier (Lent et al., 1994). Hunter (1992) found that 73% of participants surveyed in her study of 93 master's students "acknowledged members of the profession at their undergraduate institutions who not only introduced them to the idea of working in student affairs, but also encouraged and guided their inquiries about such work" (p.183). Additionally, many scholars describe the important role critical incidents played in one's decision to enter the field (Hunter, 1992; Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Taub & McEwen, 2006). These researchers have identified that student affairs-related experiential learning, such as such as student employment in student affairs functional areas (i.e. resident assistant, orientation leader), outside-of-the-classroom involvement on campus, and positional leadership in clubs or organizations, served as critical incidents that inspired students' desire to enter the field of student affairs. In fact, Hunter found that 79% of participants surveyed mentioned the role of critical incidents on their decision to enter the field. Such critical incidents could be considered learning experiences within the SCCT framework (Lent et al, 1994). Lastly, alignment of personal values with student affairs professional values was also a consideration for some individuals who entered the field, as was a general desire to improve campus life (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006; Tull et al., 2009).

Professional Training

Given the absence of an undergraduate academic major in student affairs, the profession as whole relies heavily on graduate programs for new professional knowledge acquisition and skill training in student affairs (Buchanan & Shupp, 2016; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Shupp & Arminio, 2012; Waple, 2000). While there are some practitioners who forgo the formal graduate education at first, the master's degree will typically be required if the individual wants to advance in the profession. Because of this, training programs, like master's programs for student affairs, are often highlighted in the literature as one major area to modify in order to combat attrition in the field (Marshall et al., 2016). Additionally, an understanding of current practices in professional training and socialization – notably focusing primarily on the graduate degree experience – shed light on the career development process of student affairs professionals.

The first formal graduate program in student affairs began in 1913 at the Teacher's College of Columbia University (Waple, 2006). Prior to this, those individuals in student-facing roles would have been training in closely related fields like psychology, education, or sociology (Waple, 2006). By 1948, about 50 institutions were offering training for student affairs; 37 of these offered both master's and doctoral degrees

(Waple, 2006). As of 2014, in the United States, there were approximately 180 higher education graduate programs, most of which are offered at mid-size public institutions (Underwood & Austin, 2016). According to Underwood and Austin's (2016) research, each master's program averages around 57 students total, yet there remain "extremely low" numbers of Students of Color and students with disabilities in such graduate programs (Linder & Winston Simmons, 2015). While the early graduate programs would have been offered exclusively face-to-face, modern technological advances have given rise to the opportunity for student affairs graduate programs to blend learning both in the classroom and online (Underwood & Austin, 2016).

Similar to other helping professions, there is both a curricular and practical component of training and socialization to the student affairs field (Perez, 2016a). This notion is commonly referred to as theory-to-practice, and typically involves coursework paired with an assistantship or internship within a student affairs functional area. Curricular elements of these programs tend to focus on student development theory, history of higher education, social justice and inclusion, campus ecology, research methods, and the specific study of different student sub-populations (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Each program emphasizes a different element of student affairs. For instance, some programs are more counseling-based, while some are focused more on practical administrative competencies (Waple, 2000). This creates an overall lack of consistency in preparation programs (Waple, 2000).

All programs, according to Perez (2017), should include elements of socialization to the profession. This socialization occurs "through daily routines in which graduate students engage, the people with whom they work, the values endorsed in the campus environment, and the rewards they receive from their endeavors" (Hirt, 2006, p. 9). Socialization in this context has several key outcomes, including knowledge acquisition, skill development, navigation of organizational cultures and politics, and overall developing a professional identity (Perez, 2017).

As Buchanan and Shupp (2016) posited, "graduate students rely on their programs to learn about the profession" (p. 113). Graduate program faculty and assistantship supervisors have a responsibility to be transparent with the realities of the field in order to provide students a realistic picture of the profession (Hunter, 1992). Even before entrance to graduate school, Burns (1982) suggested program administrators place greater emphasis on selecting students whose personal values align with the profession. This person-organization fit serves as an important indicator of satisfaction in one's occupation. The greater the fit, the more likely individuals will remain committed to the work and see their values and philosophies align with organizational values (Hunter, 1992; Tull & Medrano, 2008). In reality, this all comes down to professional identity and career commitment. Identity influences what we do personally and professionally (Wilson et al., 2016). Without alignment, a failed match between professional values and one's professional identity could result in lack of motivation, person fulfillment, and the possibility of departure from the field to "preserve…identity and self-esteem" (Perez, 2016a, p. 38; Silver & Jakeman, 2014).

Students are partners in this work as well and need to seek out opportunities to educate themselves about the realities of a career in student affairs (Marshall et al., 2016).

Perez (2017) pointed to a need for active, sustained reflection for master's candidates in student affairs in order to "determine fit within the field" and assess "the degree to which their views aligned with those of the field" (p. 841).

Socialization

While attention should be placed on selection processes, this will not be the silver bullet to attrition in the field. Most approaches to addressing attrition are related to either improving the supervisor-supervisee relationship or improving preparation (Cilente et al., 2006; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Some authors, such as Marshall et al. (2016), have discussed the need for "effective communication, mentor programs, and skills to balance work and life" among graduate student in student affairs, so that as new professionals, these experiences may promote "increased job satisfaction and retention" (p. 158). Such efforts are noble and certainly educational, but what can we do before these students enter graduate school? Exposure to the realities of the field and early socialization efforts must happen before students even enroll in graduate programs (Silver & Jakeman, 2014). Earlier exposure is common in other professions; however, given the hidden nature and lack of familiarity (Linder & Winston Simmons, 2015; Richmond & Sherman, 1991) with the student affairs profession, this can be quite challenging. "Early professional socialization experiences," according to Perez (2016b), "play a powerful role in shaping one's expectations of and commitment to the field" (p. 764). Providing such opportunities may mean that some decide not to enter the field at all, yet for those who do persist, earlier exposure to the field with greater intentionality could assist in the transition process as individuals make their way into the student affairs workforce (Davidson, 2016; Hirschy et al., 2015).

Initiatives such as the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP) assists students, particularly students from underrepresented communities, in their discernment of a career in student affairs through mentoring relationships and intentional experiences (Silver & Jakeman, 2014). NUFP is just one example of a socialization effort aimed at promoting the diversification of the field – but also to decrease attrition. It fits in nicely to Tull et al.'s (2009) recommendations of ways to decrease attrition in the field by paying "careful attention to the socialization process from one's first awareness of the field" (p. 229).

Undergraduate Career Development Courses. As a way to introduce the field to undergraduates before entering graduate school, some institutions such as Bucknell University (n.d), University of Georgia (n.d), Colorado State University (n.d), and Indiana University (n.d.) provide coursework designed for students interested in exploring student affairs. These courses are a relatively new practice within higher education and have not been around long enough to run appropriate assessments to determine the influence of such a course on career development or career decision making. The purpose of this study was to come to a better understanding of the influence such courses have on career development and entry into the field of student affairs. Therefore, the following section will broadly explore career development courses, as such interventions have demonstrated utility in fostering students' career development (Freeman et al., 2017).

There appear to be a variety of career courses offered throughout the country. Career courses emerged in the early 1900s in effort to deliver more robust, wide-spread career planning interventions to students (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). According to a 2000 study from Halasz and Kempton (2000), approximately 28 out of 40 responding institutions offered a career course. A contrary finding was reported by a 2014 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) study, where roughly one-third of career services offices (240 of NACE's 734 member institutions) noted offering a credit-bearing career course (Freeman et al., 2017). The discrepancy here could be attributed to each study's sample, as career courses are sometimes offered by the university's career services office and other times offered by individual academic departments/disciplines (Bimrose et al., 2005). Regardless, there is quite a variety of types of career courses. Some courses are geared toward first and second year students to help students choose majors and plan for the rest of their time in college (Fouad et al., 2016), while others are geared toward a specific academic department and intended for upperclassmen (Dodson et al, 1996; Thomas & McDaniel, 2004). Some courses are for-credit, while others are electives and not worth any credit.

Despite their varied approach, career courses are well-received and are seen as an effective career developmental intervention. In fact, Whiston et al. (1988) found that career courses were in the top three most successful career interventions. Heppner and Krause (1979) indicated that such courses increased student career development competencies and career decision-making ability (Freeman et al., 2017; Fouad et al., 2016; Hansen et al., 2017; Harren, 1978). Similarly, Brooks (1995) found that participants in career courses began career planning earlier, had greater self-awareness, demonstrated a better idea of the realities of the job market, and had resumes ready before graduation.

The existing literature provides guidance on the types of activities that have proven successful in career courses. Successful elements advance the career decision-making ability and career decision self-efficacy of students. Such elements include lectures and discussions, small group activities, written reflections of personal and career-related goals, mentorship throughout the discernment process, information about graduate school, an informational interview, and the occasional guest speaker (Brown & Krane, 2000; Freeman et al., 2017; Thomas & McDaniel, 2004). These elements helped form a rich learning environment for students to see themselves in certain careers and explore how their unique skills, knowledge, and identity could contribute to that field.

One such example of a career course for upperclassmen comes from psychology. The work of Dodson et al. (1996), as well as Thomas and McDaniel (2004), describe courses for undergraduate students nearing the end of their college career. Faculty noticed psychology majors were unaware or not prepared for the job search or the graduate school application process (Dodson et al., 1996; Thomas & McDaniel, 2004). The career course's objectives, therefore, related to acquiring knowledge on career options, bolstering confidence in abilities to make career decisions, and overall work toward a vocational identity (Thomas & McDaniel, 2004). In the cases described by Dodson et al. and Thomas and McDaniel, both reported success of course objectives, with significant increases seen in "student's self-perceived knowledge of career options" and "confidence in their ability to make career decisions" (p. 26).

Undergraduate Career Courses in Student Affairs. Unlike psychology, student affairs is not traditionally an undergraduate discipline; therefore, there are very few instances of academic coursework in student affairs for undergraduate students. Rather, the field of student affairs spends the majority of its preparation and socialization efforts on graduate students pursuing a master's degree in higher education/student affairs. However, the literature and research in this area suggest that professional socialization in student affairs actually begins during an individual's undergraduate career (Tull et al., 2009). After all, "college provides the ideal environment for the discovery of the career options that best offer the individual the opportunity to develop" (Ortiz & Shintaku, 2004, p. 165). As Tull et al. describe, "new professionals often first learn about the values of our profession before they are even aware there is a profession called student affairs" (p. 218). Early exposure to the values of the field provide an opportunity for undergraduate students to test out person-organization fit and to begin forming perceptions of the field, teasing out if it may be for them (Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Tull & Medrano, 2008). This process assists the student in developing a more realistic picture of the profession. The more familiar students are with the field, the greater their success and persistence in the profession (Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Consequently, it is important to expose prospective student affairs professionals to the field early and provide more practical, realistic depictions of what it may be like for them to actually work in the field. This may include aspects of the anticipatory stage of socialization, noted by Tull et al. – which include mentoring and job shadowing programs. Exposure could also include a formalized undergraduate career development course for those discerning a career in student affairs. Such courses currently exist in small pockets (Bucknell University, n.d.; Colorado State University, n.d.; Indiana University, n.d.; University of Georgia, n.d.). As a result, very little research and empirical evidence exists that describes the role and influence of such coursework on career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. In fact, the work of McKenzie et al. (2017) is the only literature that has specifically investigated undergraduate student affairs course.

McKenzie et al. (2017) conducted a longitudinal qualitative case study on one such undergraduate student affairs course. Over the course of four academic years, the authors tracked the career trajectory of the course's students to understand how undergraduate students prepare for careers in student affairs. The students enrolled in the course "to learn more about the field as a way to ensure it was the right choice for them" (McKenzie et al., 2017, p. 54). The course itself provided opportunities to explore terms, topics, and readings otherwise restricted to the graduate preparation programs in student affairs. It also provided the knowledge and relevant experiences for student reflection on this particular occupation. The students in the course reported to the research team that, as a result of this course, they felt more comfortable and confident with their transition to graduate school. According to McKenzie et al., this confidence, comfortability, and general understanding of the field "creates better-informed graduate school applicants who are more confident in their career decision and may be more inclined to persist in the field" (McKenzie et al, 2017, p. 58). Like most career-courses across disciplines, this career course served all students – not just those who ended up going into the profession. Some of the students did end up pursing a graduate degree in student affairs, while others realized through reflection during the course that the profession was not for them. Given the research available on socialization and attrition among student affairs practitioners, greater attention must be placed on ensuring undergraduate students are well-informed before committing two years to a master's program for a field they know little about. Undergraduate coursework like the one described by McKenzie et al. can provide such information and time for reflection in order to help undergraduate students make informed decisions.

Despite the lack of research in this area, the work of McKenzie et al. (2017) aligns well with the previous research on discipline-specific career courses conducted by Dodson et al. (1996) and Thomas and McDaniel (2004). For instance, both courses were designed for upperclass students to explore next steps and assist in their commitment to making the next career decision. Additionally, Dodson et al. shared their career course for psychology majors provided "interested students information presented in a systematic and meaningful way, rather than in the uneven and piecemeal fashion that is typical in the absence of such an approach" (p. 239). This statement connects well to the reality for many aspiring student affairs professionals – an overall lack of formalized exposure to the field. In many ways, without such career courses, a lot is left up to chance. This is evident in the existing literature regarding entry into the student affairs profession (Hunter, 1992; Samuda Byard, 2016). While more research is needed, based on a review of the relevant literature, an undergraduate career course in student affairs may be able to play an important role on the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals.

Chapter Summary

This study primarily focused on the investigation of the effect of undergraduate career courses on career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. Such courses are a means of socialization to the profession of student affairs, yet very little research has been conducted in effort to better understand these interventions. This chapter reviewed the relevant research related to this topic. The literature review highlighted the nature of the student affairs profession – that is, how it came to be, how individuals ended up making their career in the profession, and the ways in which new and aspiring student affairs professionals are trained and socialized. Additionally, and perhaps more concerning, the literature revealed an alarming trend of departure from the field of student affairs within five years. Given these realities, attention shifted away from the profession and to career development broadly. This review highlighted relevant career theories, as well as research exploring the relationship between academic major choice and career development. Given the alarming attrition rates, career decision making and self-efficacy concepts were defined and explored further. Finally, I reported on relevant literature with respect to career courses – their successes, prevalence, and outcomes. This information, while not directly related, helped in the construction of this study, as well as reporting the results and implications for the student affairs profession and those aspiring to a career in student affairs.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose

Higher education administrators and researchers alike have long kept tabs on the alarming attrition rates within the student affairs profession. Research on the topic indicates roughly 50-60% who enter student affairs have left the field within the first five years (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). This is not a new phenomenon. In fact, Evans (1988) explored attrition in the field over thirty years ago when studies indicated the attrition rate was between 25-40%. There continue to be new studies and research published on this attrition rate and its causes. Reasons for departure are well-published, including lack of investment from supervisor/institution, excessive work hours, and disconnect between work performed and compensation, among others (Marshall et al., 2016; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Tull, 2006). This research highlights the practical reasons for departure; however, to best address attrition, researchers must understand not only the reasons for departure, but also the reasons for entry into the field. Understanding the decision to pursue a career in student affairs provides the opportunity to study persistence by specifically looking at career development, alignment of values, and self-efficacy.

Many who enter the field of student affairs share they stumbled upon the profession or were shoulder-tapped (Hunter, 1992). Some literature is available on this topic. Hunter (1992), Taub and McEwen (2006), and Linder and Winston Simmons (2015) focused on the extracurricular elements that draw students to the field. However, there is very little research on undergraduate coursework’s influence on the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. A recent trend has some institutions offering introductory student affairs courses for undergraduates (Bucknell University, n.d.; Colorado State University, n.d.; Indiana University, n.d.; University of Georgia, n.d.). For this dissertation, I refer to these courses collectively as Student Affairs (SA) 101. There is little empirical research on such courses and no understanding of how such coursework influences career development or career self-efficacy. As such, this study aimed to address this research problem – that is, a need to understand the unique role of SA 101 on the career development of student affairs practitioners.

The purpose of this study was to explore the role SA 101 has on the career development and trajectory of its students. Using Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory, this study aimed to understand the degree to which students saw alignment between the student affairs profession and their own career goals and interests, as well as how their self-efficacy and outcome expectations toward a career in student affairs changed throughout SA 101. The following questions guided this research:

1. How did SA 101 contribute to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs?
2. In what ways did this course assist students in the development of self-efficacy in relation to their interest in pursuing a career in student affairs?
3. To what degree did students in SA 101 describe positive outcome expectations and personal goals aligning with a career in students affairs?
4. Following SA 101, why did (or didn't) students enrolled in SA 101 pursue a master's degree in student affairs and/or a career in student affairs?

Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical framework utilized to ground this study was social cognitive career theory (SCCT). As previously explored in the literature review, SCCT was first theorized by Lent et al. (1994). SCCT is a sociocognitive career theory based on the work of Bandura (1986). In essence, Lent et al. provided a framework for understanding career development through the understanding of career interests and career decision making. SCCT posited that three variables influence career development and choice. Those three variables are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. These variables work in conjunction with other factors such as demographic and personal inputs, contextual influences, environmental factors, and learning experiences (Lent et al., 1994). In short, SCCT is meant to "explain individual variability in career interest, choice, and performance…[and]…it may also offer some useful implications for designing developmental, preventive, and remedial career interventions" (Lent & Brown, 1996, p. 7). For the purposes of this study, Lent et al.'s SCCT model of career choice was utilized.

SCCT was the ideal theoretical framework for this study because of its focus on career development. Given the on-going narrative on attrition in the field of student affairs (Holmes et al., 1983; Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008), Lent et al.'s (1994) model was useful to understanding salient experiences for individuals considering a career in student affairs. As stated earlier, one way to understand the problem of attrition in student affairs is to understand the career development process for entering professionals (Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009). SCCT links self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals to career development, while also acknowledging the importance of learning experiences in the career interest and choice process (Lent et al., 1994). SCCT's incorporation of self-efficacy, positive outcome expectations, and personal goals is of critical importance to understanding why an individual enters or leaves a given profession.

Perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks of using SCCT as a theoretical framework was its overall lack of detail with respect to the learning experiences component of the model. Though Lent et al. (1994) mentioned the "importance of learning experiences," the authors spend very little time detailing what constitutes a learning experience and what make such experiences influential for career development (p. 85). In fact, Lent et al. noted the need for future research in this area. The applicability of SCCT, as well as the need for additional research in the learning experiences variable within SCCT, provided a compelling need for this study.

Academic Planning

This study specifically sought to understand the role of undergraduate student affairs coursework on aspiring student affairs professionals' career development. Given the academic nature of such coursework, utilizing a conceptual framework from curriculum planning literature aided in the structure of this study and guided the study of the course itself. While SCCT remained the dominant theoretical and conceptual framework, research and concepts surrounding academic planning, particularly course planning, served as a small, secondary framework to understand and contextualize this study.

From a macro perspective, the college curriculum influences career decision making among college students. Lattuca and Stark (2009) asserted “the primary purpose of college instruction is to promote students’ cognitive growth” (p. 17). Lattuca and Stark’s text provided a basis for understanding academic planning and curriculum development on both a macro and micro level. Given the research presented throughout the literature review, it is evident college instruction does more than just influence cognitive development, but also assists students in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes throughout the learning process (Bimrose et al., 2005). This was done on the institutional and college level, but also within individual courses as well. The course design process, as outlined by Lattuca and Stark, starts from early ideas jotted down by the faculty member and moves through to learning objectives and all the way through to the course evaluation. In course design, there are three decision areas: what areas will be taught, why, and decisions on how to facilitate learning of the concepts for the course (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). These three areas must be of consideration for all coursework, including career courses like the one explored in this study. Therefore, the course design concepts outlined by Lattuca and Stark provided an additional framework to understand the study at hand.

Positionality and Epistemological Perspective

Before diving into the methods of the study, it is important to acknowledge my positionality as a researcher. The personal experiences, background, worldview, and opinions of a researcher greatly influence the research design, process, and analysis of such a project. Such characteristics reveal both my positionality and reflexivity as a researcher. As Barry et al. (1999) shared, "reflexivity emphasizes an awareness of the researcher's own presence in the research process" (p. 30). Reflexivity demands researchers reflect on their personal experience and backgrounds that have shaped contexts and biases. Consciously or unconsciously, researchers may weave these contexts and biases into their work. Since my chosen research relates closely to my full-time profession, it is particularly important for me to check my assumptions and biases. In an attempt to combat this, I am drawing specific attention and calling out my positionality in this section. This is done, in part, as a way to mitigate bias in this study and ensure full transparency.

Research Philosophy and Paradigm

Experiences in and out of the classroom shaped my research philosophy and research paradigm. I understand the connection between my lived experiences and my research philosophy. I tend to lean more towards the constructivist perspective, which argues that there are multiple, socially-constructed realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is, after all, the basis for social science research. More specifically, however, I self-identify as a pragmatic researcher, believing there is only one reality, but each individual may hold a unique interpretation of that reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This paradigm influences my research methods, and influenced my approach to this project specifically.

Biases

Acknowledging my place in this world was an important first step when considering reflexivity. My worldview certainly has an impact on my research projects. As a result, I must be mindful of my biases. As a White, able-bodied, heterosexual cisgender man, I recognize I have individual privileges others do not. This privilege influences my worldview. My worldview is shaped by these identities – as well as other identities I hold as a husband, father, a student, and a student affairs practitioner. For better or worse, I approach all my research with these identities intact. It stands to reason that these identities affect my research.

These identities affect every part of this dissertation and subsequent data collection and analysis. For instance, the literature I thought was relevant to this dissertation was highlighted in Chapter 2. My worldview and identities certainly played a role in shaping what relevant literature I chose to highlight - and also, what is certainly missing from my literature review. So too, my selected methods and site selection are a sign of my comfortability as a researcher and my physical ability to conduct observations, interviews, and document analysis.

To check this, particularly in the data analysis phase, I was cautious when drawing conclusions from the data. Throughout this study, I interacted with individuals who hold different experiences, worldviews, and identities than my own. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to be sure I clarify data collected with the participants of this study to be sure it is their story and an accurate snapshot of the case in question – rather than my opinions, assumptions, or interpretations based on what I saw, heard, read, or inferred. I clarified data by conducting member checks and designing the study to support triangulation.

While I have no existing relationship with the case selected, the institution, or the students involved in the study, my bias toward the importance of this research must be examined. I recognize that as a student affairs practitioner myself, I have a vested stake in this research topic. During the course of this study, I served in professional roles within student housing and residence life. As of the publication of this dissertation, I have worked full-time, post-master's degree in the field of student affairs for over seven years. All seven of those have been within residence life, from live-in hall director roles to associate director positions. Throughout my career thus far, I have worked with many students in exploring their interest in the field of student affairs. This was all done informally, usually in a one-on-one setting. For some, I would shoulder-tap students who I felt may be interested and successful in student affairs. This is in line with the research on entry into student affairs conducted by Hunter (1992) and Taub and McEwen (2006). More often than not, however, students mention their interest in the profession to me and in turn, I attempt to serve as an encouraging resource and mentor to them. The idea of an undergraduate student affairs course is exciting and interesting to me as a practitioner, though I do not have previous experience with a formal, for-credit undergraduate student affairs course. Knowing what I know now, I wish such a course would have existed when I was an undergraduate student.

Outside of my professional experiences, my undergraduate and graduate experiences shaped my position on this topic as well. I carry with me my own experiences when I was an undergraduate student interested in student affairs, as well as when I was a master's student in a higher education and student affairs-focused program. These experiences helped to shape me into the person I am today. It means I can speak the lingo and that I generally "get it," but also meant I needed to check myself as I conducted this research.

As an undergraduate student, I was a secondary education major at an institution in my home city. I opted not to live on campus to save the expense, and instead lived at home with my parents throughout my four years in college. My education was almost entirely funded by a merit and need-based, state-sponsored scholarship for low-income students. The Goodrich Scholarship Program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha helped to shape my college experience. Goodrich curriculum put me in close contact with my faculty, as well as my peers. My classmates in the Goodrich Program held different social identities and through our interactions, I learned more about the experiences of others, their cultures, and worldviews. There was diversity in race, social class, age, religion, sexuality, gender identity, political affiliation, and more. As a White, abled-bodied, cis man, I remember feeling strange in this setting, but the faculty of the program encouraged dialogue and demonstrated compassion and understanding, while also helping challenge our assumptions, beliefs, and statements.

Overall, the Goodrich Program encouraged me to be an active participant in the university community. As an undergraduate, I was involved with student government, new student orientation, worked on campus, and more. These experiences pointed me to the student affairs field. Many mentors and advisors helped further my understanding and interest in student affairs. When the time came, these same individuals pushed me to look for graduate programs outside of the state of Nebraska. For that reason, I applied to graduate programs out of state. Once my mind was made up, I never really considered the option of not pursuing the master's degree in student affairs, though my student teaching experience did give me pause, as I greatly enjoyed working with high school students. Overall, I was not worried about the financial impact or concern about my ability to succeed. In this sense, I had the privilege to follow my interest without regard for barriers others may have encountered.

My graduate school experience followed a very typical student affairs graduate program framework. My assistantship was within student activities and orientation at a small, private institution, while I took classes in a cohort model both in-person and online. My housing was covered by the institution, with some funding for coursework. There were many meaningful parts of this journey, but perhaps most important were the friendships made with members in my cohort. These relationships formed through coursework, but also through the work of our assistantships. These relationships, as well as the experience overall, would have looked quite different had I been closer to home, married or had children, and so forth. This experience informs my understanding of student affairs socialization and training. It influences my daily work and my worldview to this day.

These, and many other lived experiences shaped this research in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, my experiences help provide me context for the student affairs profession. My experiences in the field help me to process and understand the materials and discussions which make up the foundation of SA 101. Additionally, I am able to develop a type of rapport with both the students and instructors in the course because I am closer in age to them than an older researcher trying to investigate this phenomenon. Alternatively, my experiences influence this research in negative ways as well. My undergraduate experience lent itself well to pursuing a master's degree immediately after my undergraduate. Because of this, I consciously and subconsciously share affinity to those who seek out a graduate degree in student affairs, rather than those who opt for bachelor's level positions within the field. Additionally, my upbringing, specifically my social class and economic advantages growing up, allowed me to explore and consider careers in any field. I was granted implicit permission and had the means to explore these interests and passions. For a variety of reasons, not all aspiring student affairs professionals are able to do this.

Research Design

This study utilized a single case study design and methodology. Case study methodology was selected for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, case study allows for the in-depth discovery and analysis of one contemporary phenomenon (or one case) at a time (Yin, 2014). Spending time with one case afforded me the opportunity to give special consideration and time to understand and contextualize the rich, real-world setting of such a case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). This attention to context was an important element for a study such as the one described here, because understanding the role of SA 101 (an emerging/contemporary trend) on a student's career development should include a rich description of the context (Flyvbjerg, 2006). A single case approach was utilized because of my interest in an average, common case – that is to say, the desire was to select a case that captures "the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation" (Yin, 2014, p. 52).

Case Definition and Description

To understand how SA 101 influences career development, I selected a single case, which contained multiple embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2014). The case itself was one undergraduate course section of SA 101 that focused on introducing the field of student affairs to undergraduate students. Selection of the case was based on a review of select syllabi from such courses across the country and had to have met the criteria described in this section. The case selected must focus on teaching introductory concepts related to the field of student affairs. Given the literature from Hunter (1992) and Taub and McEwen (2006), the case should be designed for upper-class students (non-first year students). Additionally, the case must spend course time (discussions, assignments, etc.) on student reflection and discernment of the possibility of a career in student affairs, including some discussion of graduate degree programs. Finally, the case must be within a five-hour radius of my home in Omaha, Nebraska and be offered in the fall or spring semester.

These criteria were established to identify a "common" case (Yin, 2014), a course that focused on providing a basic introduction to the field of student affairs for students considering a career in the field. In addition, as Yin discussed, with case study research demanding a high-degree of context and information about the case, I needed to have appropriate access to the case itself. Limiting the case selection to an institution within a five-hour radius of my home afforded me the opportunity and flexibility to get to the site more frequently.

Given the above criteria, the case proposed for this study was an undergraduate student affairs exploratory course taught at mid-size public university in the Midwest. For the purposes of this study, I refer to the institution using the pseudonym Century University. This case was selected because it met all of the above-mentioned criteria for selection. In addition, it took into account the need for access, as Yin (2014) described. The case was bounded well, as it specifically established the course as the case and differentiated between the unit of analysis (i.e. students in the class) versus data points to further understand the context (i.e. document analysis of the course syllabus and specific assignments). Finally, this case represented a normal, or common, case. More detailed information on the case context, learning objectives and strategies, and assignments within SA 101 is provided in Chapter 4. Bottom line, the case represented an initiation of dialogue on SA 101, where there is currently little empirical data. The findings and implications of this research inform researchers, administrators, faculty, student affairs professionals, among others, and established the "need for general understanding, and…insight" on this topic (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

Because the focus of this case study was to understand how the course contributes to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs, I utilized several different methods described in subsequent sections.

Participant Sampling Strategy

Considering the case as the course itself, the entire population was the number of students enrolled in the course, which was 21 students. I removed one student from consideration because they were a first-year student. All students in the course were given the opportunity to express interest in participating in the study. Both instructors, hereafter referred to using the pseudonyms Ann and Oak, were also included in the study as participants. Given the small population size of student participants, as well as the qualitative research design, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested non-probability sampling for a case like this. Perhaps the most common form of non-probability sampling within qualitative research is known as purposeful sampling. For this study, purposeful sampling made the most sense because it allowed me the flexibility to select the sample "from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). Selection/criterion-based selection was utilized in order to identify a typical sample of the population. In this case, I identified students with varying levels of commitment to pursuing student affairs as a career, while also attempting to select participants representative of Century University demographics as well as student affairs profession demographics as well. These decisions were made based on results of a questionnaire students were asked to complete. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. Given the subgroups of the sample, this is considered stratified purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This provided me the opportunity to interview students in the course, all with varying levels of commitment and efficacy toward the idea of pursuing a career in student affairs. With this sample of six students, I was able to draw some conclusions about the course itself and its influence on student career development.

Data Collection

I collected data using three different approaches: document analysis, observations, and interviews. This section reviews each of the three data collection techniques and explains how each will be implemented. Overall, each of the three collection methods relied on one another, serving as a way to triangulate the data and provide trustworthiness.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was just one of many forms of data collection used in this case study. As Merriam (1988) shared, "documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 118). Yin (2014) shared that document analysis is stable and can be reviewed in its original state an unlimited number of times. In addition, Yin shared that such analysis is not overly taxing on the participant and is relatively easy to access for the researcher. The documentation from this course provides substantive context for the overall case itself and assists in the understanding of the context and the embedded units discussed later. The main documents analyzed as part of this case study included the syllabus, course readings, and three relevant assignment submissions from each student participant.

Course Syllabus. The syllabus for the course was the very first document analyzed for this study. As Grauerholz and Gibson (2006) noted, a syllabus is "an excellent source of information," serving to highlight goals for the course, content to cover, pedagogical strategies utilized, and student learning assessments (p. 9). Utilizing the criteria set in a previous section of this dissertation, the syllabus was reviewed in order to make the case selection. Used in this way, the syllabus was a powerful tool for case selection and the structure of data collection strategies. This is because the syllabus serves many purposes including communication of content and an overall course sequence for students (Fink, 2012). Additionally, in my eyes as a researcher, the syllabus provided the overall flow of the course itself and was an invaluable tool to help identity other documents to be analyzed, class sessions to observe, the timing of student interviews, and more. In fact, the syllabus was the driving force behind the overall flow of data collection described in Table 3.1, as well as the plan for concurrent analysis.

Course Readings. Similarly, the course readings served as additional documents to analyze. In effort to understand and contextualize the setting of this case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014), the course readings provided insight on the case itself. Since the case is SA 101, analyzing the course readings was imperative to further understand the messaging conveyed throughout the class. This study attempted to understand career development occurring concurrently and as a result of SA 101. Course readings provided context and understanding of the messaging, lessons, and cues sent to students, which was helpful in understanding the role of the course as a learning experience using SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). Such readings were a tool for instructors to convey messages and concepts to students. It is one example of a teaching strategy noted as part of the course planning steps outlined by Lattuca and Stark (2009).

Assignment Submissions. In addition to a review of the syllabus and course readings, document analysis also included a review of select assignment submissions from the selected sample of students in the course. The selected assignments sought to address the students' interest and reflection upon the idea of a career in student affairs. These personal reflections or capstone projects provided a window into the thought-processes of the students in the class. These assignments, or documents, provided what Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described as the “inner meaning of everyday events” (p. 166). After a review of the syllabus, student submissions for three assignments were selected to be part of the document analysis. These three assignments, detailed in Table 3.1, each provided a window into understanding students’ interest in this career field, the goals they had for themselves both personally and professionally, and their personal abilities and attributes. The first assignment was a personal statement focusing on why a student is interested in student affairs and what relevant experiences they would bring to the field. The second assignment was a professional competencies self-evaluation, where students were asked to assess their ability in six different areas. The final assignment used in document analysis was the course’s final reflection assignment, in which students were asked to pull together what they learned from the semester. These areas specifically assisted in developing a rich understanding of the case, but also linked nicely with the concepts of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals as outlined in SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) as this study’s theoretical framework.

Document analysis also informed the other data collection methods. For instance, the syllabus informed not only the assignments to be analyzed, but also helped inform the class sessions to observe and the timing of student interviews. Such document analysis, as Bowen (2009) described, suggested further questions to be asked and situations to be observed and also tracks changes and development over the course of the study. On the flip side as well, Yin (2014) described document analysis as a tool to “corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 107). In this way, document analysis informed, as well as was informed by the other methods utilized in this case study.

Observations

Case study methodology is entrenched in a real-world context that makes it an ideal setting to conduct direct observations (Yin, 2014). Such methodology allowed for social, environmental, and context-specific data collection. In particular, observation assisted in collecting data to help build and describe the case overall. Yin shared that "observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied" (p. 114). This additional information assisted in my understanding of the case and of the experiences of the students in the classroom.

Direct observations supplemented the other two data collection techniques in this case study. I utilized the syllabus and worked with the instructors to identify several class sessions in which the lesson focuses on the student affairs profession and where interaction was high. After reviewing the syllabus and speaking with the course instructors, I identified three in-person class meetings to assist in my understanding of the case. While some of the observations ended up being over Zoom due to COVID-19, I believe these observations afforded me, as a nonparticipant (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the opportunity to see the instructor and the students in action – to see and hear content in a context otherwise not available through document analysis or interviews. These observations informed my interviews with the students as well, giving me the ability to add additional questions related to what I saw and heard during the class.

I conducted my observations using the six items mentioned by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), including the physical space, the participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors, and the researcher's behavior. These items from Merriam and Tisdell, as well as the work by Creswell and Poth (2018), assisted in the creation of an observational protocol for this case (see Appendix C). Certainly, these six areas and the protocol document provide a template framework for observations; however, more specifically, the research problem, the study's questions, and the theoretical framework were utilized to determine items to be observed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 140). Therefore, observations focused on identifying examples where the course assisted students in developing congruence, self-efficacy, expanding their knowledge of the profession, checking expectations versus realities of this career field, identifying goals and interests, as well as considering environmental factors (Lent et al., 1994).

Interviews

Interviewing was part of the data collection strategy for this study because it provided greater understanding of "the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). This fit in nicely with this study's overall research questions and theoretical framework. Meaning-making is a primary piece of understanding career development through SCCT (Lent et al, 1994). The interviewing technique provided me the opportunity to greater understand this context-specific meaning-making for each individual in this particular setting. For this reason, interviewing needed to be part of the data collection strategy for this study. Therefore, I conducted interviews with the instructors and interviews with six select students in the class.

Instructor Interviews. The instructor interviews were meant to elicit information about the class, the students, and provide context for the course. The SCCT framework (Lent et al., 1994), as well as the academic planning concepts discussed earlier, were used to develop questions to ask the instructor of the course. For example, the interview protocols, as outlined in Appendices D and E, highlight the concepts proposed by Lattuca and Stark (2009) as necessary for effective course planning. In addition, the interviews with the instructors sought out information on specific elements of the learning experience that they believe had an influence on career development among their students. These interviews also assisted in understanding the pedagogical strategies utilized in the class, as well as student learning assessment tools. Overall, an interview before SA 101 and after SA 101 were opportunities to further understand the case and provided a rich description of SA 101. Two interviews were conducted with each instructor: once before the class started and one at the conclusion of the course.

Student Interviews. Following the instructor interview, the focus shifted to the students in the class. Students in the class were the main embedded units of analysis for this case study. Following the participant sampling procedures detailed earlier, interviews were conducted following the general sequence offered by Seidman (2006). This involved six students, each participating in a series of three interviews over the course of the semester. At the beginning of the semester, four of the student participants shared they more than likely would pursue a career in student affairs. The remaining two students shared they were undecided as to whether they would pursue a career in student affairs. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. The first interview's topic was a focused life history (Seidman, 2006) to understand the factors that led to the student's decision to enroll in SA 101. Questions for the first interview infused the SCCT framework (Lent et al., 1994) by asking about personal inputs, goals, expectations of the course, assumptions about the profession and skills needed, and whether they planned to pursue a career in student affairs. The second interview focused on the details of the experience within SA 101, which is why it was conducted mid-semester. This second interview also employed SCCT to guide the line of questioning. Many of the questions related to how the course influenced students' career interests and choice, as well as confidence/self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994) if they decided to pursue student affairs. The final interview served as a reflection on the meaning of the overall SA 101 experience and occurred at the end of the course. Many of the same questions from the first two interviews were asked in this final interview as a means to track development and changes in efficacy and outcome expectations over time. This final interview took SCCT farther by asking students about their ability to make informed decisions about their career choice as a result of SA 101.

As Creswell and Poth (2018) described, there is great need for an interview protocol. This protocol informs the organization and content sought out during the interview itself. I value consistency in interview questions and format, but also recognized the need for some flexibility. For this reason, interviews were semi-structured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), allowing room for asking clarifying questions as well as asking questions when I need to hear more on a particular subject. In addition, a semi-structured interview format allowed flexibility for the interviewer to add in questions related to class observations and assignment submissions from the student. The interview questions used for all three student interviews are included in Appendices F through H. These questions were developed to be open-ended so as to elicit rich responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) from participants so that all responses can be related back to the research questions and the SCCT theoretical framework of the study. In addition, the questions sought to address both the case and the individual interviewees, addressing level one and two questions as Yin (2014) proposed.

After each interview, I used a transcription service to have each interview transcribed verbatim. This helped to ensure each interview was transcribed as quickly as possible following the interview, while the conversation was fresh in my memory. It also allowed for timely member-checking. Student and instructor interview transcripts were emailed to the participant for their review within one week of the conclusion of the interview to verify the transcription for accuracy. Additionally, once each interview was transcribed, I created profiles for each participant. These profiles were based on the information I knew of the student from the interview, from assignment submissions, and classroom observations. Each profile contained the highlights from the interview and began to establish the trends and themes from the interview, as well as relevant information from the document analyses and observations. Developing profiles assisted in data analysis, and were helpful to read and refresh my memory before beginning subsequent interviews. Such profiles also informed subsequent interviews with participants. Following each interview, observation, and assignment submission in the sequence, the profile was updated to track the changes and development of participants over time (Bowen, 2009).

Data Collection Sequence

For each data collection method to build on one another, the flow of data collection followed a prescribed sequence. Organization and sequencing was critical to this data approach. Given the outline of the course, data collection bounced between methods. For example, a review of the syllabus was first because it set up the flow of the remaining collection. Based on the syllabus, the sequence jumped to the first interview, then the first observation, collection and analysis of two assignments, and so forth. Table 3.1 details the specific sequence utilized for this study, as well as the uses of each data source. In this way, the information collected from each source informed and built upon one other.

Data Analysis

All data from the document analysis, interviews, observations, field notes, researcher memos, and participant profiles were analyzed using Dedoose to report the findings of this study. While there was a lot to sort through, the overall goal of the analysis was to see reappearing themes, for as Stake (1995) suggested, “usually the most important meanings will come from reappearance over and over” (p. 78). The use of document analysis, observations, and interviews increased the odds of seeing a repetition of information – and thus, created conditions to reach saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This analysis was performed concurrent with data collection. As Miles et al.

Table 3.1

Data Collection Usage and Sequence

Data Source	Description	Use	Link to Conceptual Framework	Collection Timeframe	Analysis
Document analysis: Syllabus	Reviewed to ensure case fits the criteria, as well as to select in-class observation dates, assignments for review, and overall development of this sequence	Understand the purpose of the course, what areas were taught, and overall emphasis on course topics; description of the case to readers for transferability	Information on SA 101 as a learning experience	Before semester begins December 2019	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Document analysis: Course readings	A review of the readings (e.g. articles, excerpts, handouts) used in the class	Provided context and understanding of messaging conveyed to students	Information on SA 101 as a learning experience	Throughout the semester	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Interview: Instructor interview #1	About the class, the students enrolled, course planning techniques utilized.	Provided context for what will be taught, why, and pedagogical decisions made; perspectives on how SA 101 influences career development to inform the case overall	Information on SA 101 as a learning experience	Before semester begins December 2019	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Interview: Student interview #1	Before/just as the class begins; focused life history and understanding of salient social identities	Understand person inputs, current interest in the field, level of commitment to this decision, and perception of skills needed to be successful	Understanding personal inputs; asking about professional goals, outcome expectations, self-efficacy; understanding personal values in relation to student affairs	Before/as semester begins January 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding

Table 3.1 continues

Data Source	Description	Use	Link to Conceptual Framework	Collection Timeframe	Analysis
Interview: Student interview #1	Before/just as the class begins; focused life history and understanding of salient social identities	Understand person inputs, current interest in the field, level of commitment to this decision, and perception of skills needed to be successful	Understanding personal inputs; asking about professional goals, outcome expectations, self-efficacy; understanding personal values in relation to student affairs	Before/as semester begins January 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding
Observation: Observation #1	Session topic: class expectations, overview of student affairs careers and functional areas	Used to see where the course, specifically the in-person (or synchronous) class session, assists students in developing career interests and choice – by way of developing alignment, self-efficacy, expanding knowledge of the profession, checking expectations versus realities of the occupation, identifying goals and interests	Information on SA 101 as a learning experience – and to tease out instances of SCCT variables in conversations within the class	January 2020	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Document analysis: Review of assignment #1	Personal Statement – has student describe their interest in student affairs, past experiences, and qualifications	Insight into the interests of the student with respect to the field and has them forecast into the future to imagine themselves as student affairs professionals; Reflective piece to understand value alignment	Provides opportunity to review written word of student discussing their self-efficacy and outcome expectations of a role in student affairs; Identify person inputs, interests and goals that may be noted in this reflective assignment	February 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding

Table 3.1 continues

Data Source	Description	Use	Link to Conceptual Framework	Collection Timeframe	Analysis
Document analysis: Review of assignment #2	Professional Competencies Self-Evaluation – students complete a self-evaluation of their skills across six areas where they rank and explain their competency level	Provides an opportunity for reflection of student skills matching with the skills needed in the student affairs profession	Relation to personal ability and value alignment between student and field, to assist with choice actions, overall career interest and decision making	February 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding
Observation: Observation #2	Session topic: Graduate school discussion, including programs/application process, similarities/differences among programs, and so forth	Same as Observation #1	Same as Observation #1	February 2020	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Interview: Student interview #2	Mid-semester check-in, focused on details of the experience at the midpoint of the semester	Check-in on learning thus far, re-check on level of interest in pursuing this career, how their skills align (or do not align) with the profession	Asked to reflect on confidence in their decision to pursue student affairs; seek to understand alignment between skills they possess and what is needed in the field	Midway through the course March 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding
Observation: Observation #3	Session topic: Functional unit presentations with class discussions	Same as Observation #1	Same as Observation #1	April 2020 Was conducted over Zoom	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding

Table 3.1 continues

Data Source	Description	Use	Link to Conceptual Framework	Collection Timeframe	Analysis
Observation: Observation #4	Session topic: Class recap - what students learned/decided, course assessment	Same as Observation #1	Same as Observation #1	April 2020 Was conducted over Zoom	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Interview: Student interview #3	Final interview near the end of the course, served as a reflection of the meaning of the overall SA 101 experience	Understanding of career aspirations, how this course met or did not meet expectations, interest level with respect to the field as a result of the class	Level of interest in career field; characteristics needed and their proficiency both relate to self-efficacy; how this learning experience played a role in their decision to pursue a career in this field	Near the end of the course May 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding
Interview: Instructor interview #2	How the class went, course planning techniques utilized (what worked, what didn't work), intent vs. impact	Provided context for what was taught, why, and pedagogical decisions made; perspectives on how SA 101 influenced career development	Information on SA 101 as a learning experience; understanding of influence of course elements on student career development, specifically self-efficacy and student expectations	Near the end of the course May 2020	Whole-case analysis Descriptive coding
Document analysis: Review of assignment #3	Final Exam Reflection Paper – student describes what they learned in SA 101, take-aways, key points, describing current career plans, and so forth	Reflective piece to understand main take-aways from SA 101 and current career interest check-in	Gain greater understanding of career-related decision-making process, as well as the role SA 101 played for that student	May 2020	Within-participant and cross-participant analysis Values coding

(2014) suggested, concurrent analysis allows the researcher to "cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data" (p. 70). This allowed me the opportunity to ensure each data collection method informed the other methods. For instance, concurrent collection and analysis of class assignments assisted in the interview process by providing additional context and questions for the participant. The concurrent analytic approach encouraged researcher memoing, as will be discussed. These reflective memos, paired with the data collected throughout the study, were analyzed using qualitative coding strategies, where I then categorized and themed the data (Miles et al., 2014) for each interview, observation, and document. The goal of coding was to address each of the research questions and infuse the SCCT theoretical framework. Table 3.2 details the various SCCT variables matched against the data collection techniques used in this study.

All of the data collected for this study contributed to the understanding of a single section of SA 101 at a Midwestern university. Because the case was one single, academic course, I collected data on the course overall (e.g. syllabus review, observations) but also with respect to the individual experiences of several students within the course (e.g. interviews, assignment review). Therefore, my analysis included *whole-case analysis*, *within-participant analysis*, and *cross-participant analysis*.

- *Whole-case analysis* refers to my interest in the single case – that is, SA 101 itself. Whole-case analysis looked at the structural elements of the course itself in order to contribute to the rich description Yin (2014) discussed.

Table 3.2

Primary Goals of Data Collection

	Data Collection Methods			
SCCT Concepts	**Document Analysis**	**Instructor Interviews**	**Student Interview**	**Observations**
Self-efficacy	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was written in student assignment submissions, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes	Question on how the course contributed to a change in students' self-efficacy	Questions regarding how their personal values aligned with the profession; understanding how their skills matched those needed in student affairs work	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was said, heard, or witnessed in the classroom, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes
Outcome expectations	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was written in student assignment submissions, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes	Question on how the course contributed to a change in students' expectations	Questions about how students may perform	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was said, heard, or witnessed in the classroom, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes
Personal goals/choice goals	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was written in student assignment submissions, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes		Questions about personal and professional goals and how student affairs aligns to these goals	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was said, heard, or witnessed in the classroom, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes
Learning experiences	Syllabus, course readings	Asked how the course specifically contributed to career development, had the instructor explain their role in planning the course and what the objectives of the course were	Questions about how the course contributed to their understanding of student affairs and characteristics needed for the profession	Course activities

Table 3.2 continues

	Data Collection Methods			
SCCT Concepts	**Document Analysis**	**Instructor Interviews**	**Student Interview**	**Observations**
Career interest	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was written in student assignment submissions, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes		Asked students directly about their interest in a career in student affairs	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was said, heard, or witnessed in the classroom, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes
Choice actions	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was written in student assignment submissions, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes		Questions about decision to enroll in the course, decisions to move forward in student affairs or not	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was said, heard, or witnessed in the classroom, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes
Performance achievement	Formal and informal feedback given on assignments		How they did in the class, what they learned	Formal and informal feedback given in class
Person inputs			Questions about gender and racial identity	
Contextual influences	Repetitive concepts, sayings, and messages from what was written in student assignment submissions, which eventually give way to researcher-generated themes		How peers and the instructor contributed to their learning	If students provided additional contextual factors in classroom setting

- Given the multiple embedded units of analysis within this single case study, *within-participant analysis* was used to provide an analysis of data for each one of the embedded units independent of the other embedded units. This within-participant analysis provided the summarized findings across all data collection methods individually for each student participant.
- Contrary to within-participant analysis, *cross-participant analysis* refers to the investigation of data across all collection methods and across all embedded units. Cross-participant analysis considered the similarities and differences among the student participants as part of this study.

The three work in concert with one another and provided a thorough description of the case overall. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the sequence of data collection, as well as the uses and analysis techniques used for each.

Whole-Case Analysis

In effort to best understand the case in question, I collected data on the case as a whole. This whole-case analysis provided overarching details regarding SA 101. Such analysis is useful to report the findings of a single case study, such as the one implemented. Setting aside the students in the classroom, as that will be discussed in the following section, the data collected that relates to the course overall were the document analysis of the syllabus and the course readings, the interviews with the instructors, and the three class observations. Qualitative coding methods were used to analyze these elements. I employed both a first-cycle and a second-cycling coding scheme (Saldaña, 2009). As Saldaña described, first-cycle coding is meant to serve as the initial coding of the data and be very simple and direct in nature. Second-cycle coding, on the other hand, requires the researcher to integrate and classify/categorize the initial codes from the first-cycle (Saldaña, 2009).

First-Cycle Coding: Descriptive Coding

For the first-cycle coding, I utilized descriptive coding techniques. Descriptive coding "assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase" (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 74). It is one of the more basic elemental first-cycle coding schemes described by Saldaña (2009); however, descriptive coding is noted to be the ideal coding structure for documents and field notes (Saldaña, 2009), so it worked well for analysis of the syllabus, course readings, and observational field notes. Rather than attempting to force-fit the analysis of this data, this descriptive coding was done inductively to allow for codes to "emerge progressively during data collection" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81). First-cycle code analysis was interpreted using the SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) theoretical framework and the course planning concepts from Lattuca and Stark (2009).

Second-Cycle Coding: Pattern Coding

For the second-cycle coding, I utilized pattern coding. Pattern codes "are explanatory or inferential codes…that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (Miles et al., 2014). Pattern codes, according to Miles et al., can condense large data sets into a smaller number of categorical themes. Such a coding scheme assisted me in teasing out the major themes from the within-case analysis.

Analysis of Embedded Units

The use of interviews with students in the course, as well as a review of select student assignments, were embedded units of analysis for this case study. To properly analyze the data from such embedded units, my analysis of this case study implemented both a within-participant analysis and a cross-participant analysis. Though typically thought of as part of a multiple case study, this hybrid form of cross-case analysis can increase generalizability of a study (Miles et al., 2014). Since this case study implemented multiple embedded units of analysis (the students in the class), it is possible to utilize the concepts, process, and spirit of cross-case analysis with these embedded units. Analysis was conducted both on the individual embedded unit of analysis (i.e. within-participant analysis) and overall among all embedded units (i.e. cross-participant analysis). Within-participant analysis generally followed the traditional multiple case study analysis procedure known as within-case analysis. Each of the participants in this study were treated like mini-cases (Stake, 2006), despite actually being embedded units of analysis within a single case study. On the other hand, cross-participant analysis used the embedded units of analysis in order to compare across each unit. In applying the principles of cross-case analysis to cross-participant analysis, a case-oriented approach made most sense, as it "is good at finding specific, concrete, historical grounded patterns common to small sets of cases" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 102). Stake (2006) provided greater detail on cross-case analyses, including several worksheets designed to assist researchers with such an analysis. Table 3.3 modified an existing worksheet from Stake (2006). Following the coding and theming process detailed below, I used a version of Table 3.3

to understand the differing degrees of representation among the themes across the participants – the embedded units of analysis. This uncovered relationships between themes and career development, and enhanced the overall findings of the study.

For both within-participant and cross-participant analysis, the coding scheme followed what Miles et al. (2014) called values coding. The premise was to review the transcripts, documents, participant profiles, and memos for data reflecting "a participant's values, attitudes…beliefs…perspectives or worldview" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75). Values coding is appropriate for studies related to identity (Miles et al., 2014). Identity includes a host of factors and attributes, with career/vocational aspirations as just one of the many components of identity. Using values coding for this particular analysis provided

Table 3.3

Utility of Each Case for Each Theme

	Very Interested			**On the Fence**		
	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E	Case F
Theme 1						
Theme 2						
Theme 3						
Theme 4						
Theme 5						

Key	
H	High presence
M	Medium presence
L	Low presence

understanding regarding a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs with respect to SA 101 and student affairs as a profession. Given this study's interest in how SA 101 influences career development and self-efficacy, understanding the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the students in SA 101 provided greater detail on the course itself. This is consistent with Lent et al.'s (1994) SCCT framework adopted for this study. Given the literature on SCCT and career development theory, the role of personal values, attitudes, and beliefs directly influenced career interest, choice, and development (Lent et al, 1994).

Coding

The coding scheme found in Appendix I was used for analysis and coding of all data collected, including interview transcripts, memos, observational field notes, and documents used for analysis. It is important to note that this analysis utilized deductive coding, also known as *a priori* coding or encoding (Saldaña, 2016; Stemler, 2001). *A priori*, or provisional, codes are determined deductively, using researcher-generated codes established as a result of the literature review and guided by SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) as the theoretical framework. The proposed codes, found in Appendix I, were developed based on the theoretical constructs proposed by Lent et al. The codes highlight anticipated data collected regarding participant's pre-conceived notions of the field, alignment of personal goals and values with the profession, as well as relevant career-related learning experiences. However, given the back-and-forth, concurrent nature of the data collection and analysis for this study, there was need for code revision, addition, and inductive coding (Miles et al., 2014). Therefore, after applying the provisional codes to the data set, I coded for other salient themes in the data not already represented by one of the provisional codes.

Each code linked to a value, an attitude, or a belief. According to Saldaña (2009) and Miles et al. (2014), these concepts represent individual perspectives and a participant's personal worldview. Specifically, a value refers to the "importance we attribute to ourselves, another person, thing, or idea," an attitude refers to the "way we think and feel about oneself, another person, thing, or idea," and a belief infuses "personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75). Values coding was utilized for all sources of data directly from SA 101 students, including document analysis, participant profiles, memos, and interview transcripts. When coding, it was helpful to look and listen for phrases like "it's important for me," "I like," "I love," "I think," "I feel," and so forth. (Saldaña, 2009, p. 92).

After applying the coding scheme to a particular data set, I sorted the codes by type (value, attitude, or belief) for each individual document, observation, or interview. Frequencies were noted to further this analysis. Pattern coding (Miles et al, 2014) was again used as a second-cycling coding method; however, with this cross-participant analysis, pattern coding was done individually for values, attitudes, and beliefs. After reviewing the deductive and inductive coding for a particular data set, I reflected "on their collective meaning, interaction, and interplay" in order to draw conclusions, connections, and develop themes put forth in the final synthesis of the data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 91). The results of the coding was synthesized into themes for reporting trends and results.

Memoing

Analytic memoing is described by many scholars as a method for researchers to collect, process, and synthesize their thoughts on the study and data collected (Miles et al, 2014; Yin, 2014). In this case, I audio-recorded a brief memo to myself immediately following all observations and interviews. In these memos, I highlighted the salient points of the interview, topics that were particularly worthwhile, questions I still had, and also began to draw connections between/among the interviewees and the data collected. These memos were then be transcribed, along with all field notes and interviews. Utilized in this way, researcher memos helped me turn the "concrete to the conceptual" (Birks et al., 2008, p. 71). Memoing is placed here, under data analysis, because it is a tool used to make sense of the data. That said, memos may also be coded as part of the overall analysis as well, since each memo is written about a part of the data collected.

Trustworthiness

It is one thing to collect and analyze the data for such a study, but quite another to address the validity, goodness, or trustworthiness of the study. Qualitative research is often criticized for its lack of validity and reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Given my positionality as a researcher, I believe validity and reliability to be residual terms from the days when quantitative methodology ruled the world of research. Validity and reliability, as known in the quantitative context, does not necessarily apply to qualitative research. This is why scholars like Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested different terminology to refer to "'the naturalist's equivalents'" for validity, including terms such as "credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (p. 300). Collectively these terms refer to the overall trustworthiness of a study.

Semantics aside, there is still a need for qualitative researchers to address this issue. For as Miles et al. (2014) put it, "qualitative analyses can be evocative, illuminating, masterful – and wrong" (p. 293). It was, therefore, imperative for me to address the measures taken throughout data collection and analysis in order to demonstrate rigor and trustworthiness. Qualitative scholars provide several techniques to demonstrate trustworthiness in qualitative data. For example, Whittemore et al. (2001) provided a list of over 25 techniques to support the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, including articulating sampling, data collection, and data analysis decisions, performing a literature review, triangulation, member checking, memoing, transcribing, among others. For this study, I highlight trustworthiness by discussing data triangulation, member checking, performing a literature review, acknowledging researcher perspective/checking for researcher effects, verbatim transcription, memoing, weighting the evidence, and the use of values coding.

Triangulation

Many scholars agree on the need for triangulation to demonstrate trustworthiness. That said, my main strategy for trustworthiness in this study was through triangulation. It was, as Stake (1995) called it, an ethical necessity. Simply put, triangulation is a method of confirming findings and seeks an overall convergence of evidence (Yin, 2014). Miles et al. (2014) discussed four different types of triangulation: data source, method, researcher, and theory. For the purposes of this study, I utilized what Miles et al., Stake, and Yin described as method or methodological triangulation. This type of triangulation centers on the use of different methods to support similar findings. Stake specifically calls out interviews, observations, and document analysis as three methodological approaches to utilize to triangulate data in this way. These methods align with the methods of data collection described in this dissertation and serves to enhance the study's trustworthiness by virtue of methodological diversity. In addition, with the back-and-forth nature of the collection and analysis of this study, as has been described earlier, these methods relied on and enhance one another throughout the study.

Member Checking

Another common method to demonstrate trustworthiness is to practice member checking, where participants are "asked to review the material for accuracy" (Stake, 1995, p. 115). While most discussed member checking as a tool to verify interview transcripts or preliminary results/findings (Kohlbacher, 2006; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014), member checking can include verification with participants at any stage of the study. Member checking can sometimes present challenges when participants do not respond to requests for such checks. However, one way to overcome this non-responsiveness is to conduct the check as part of a pre-scheduled interview as described earlier.

I implemented member checking throughout the data collection. This opportunity presented itself a few times over the course of the data collection. Given the overall concurrent collection and analysis strategy, this was made possible. In fact, such concurrent collection and analysis was an additional measure of trustworthiness (Miles et al., 2014). To accomplish this for this study, given the sequencing of the collection, I member-checked items from assignments, observations, and past interviews with students during their second and third individual interview. Preliminary, emerging summary of findings were presented to each student participant at the start of their second and third interview and at the start of the instructor's second interview, as a way to member-check and ensure responses to the check. Additionally, finalized findings were provided to the student participants and instructors of the course after data collection and analysis were complete, in order to further the trustworthiness of the study. All six students and both instructors responded to the final wave of member checks. The feedback received confirmed this study's summary of findings. In this context, member-checking was done as another way to strive for accuracy (Yin, 2016) and relates back to the connections among the different sources of data.

Other Techniques

There are plenty of other techniques used for trustworthiness outside of triangulation and member checking. Whittemore et al. (2001) detailed many of these, as does Miles et al. (2014). For example, Whittemore et al., describe many trustworthiness techniques that were built into my approach for this case study. For instance, "performing a literature review" and "acknowledging the researcher perspective" were both part of this case study (Whittemore et al, 2001, p. 533). In fact, acknowledging the researcher perspective is similar to Miles et al.'s idea of checking for researcher effects, another technique used to demonstrate trustworthiness. Both techniques provided context for understanding the analysis of the case study and, as such, were part of this dissertation. In addition, Whittemore et al. discussed verbatim transcription and memoing, both of which were part of the study, as other techniques to assist with trustworthiness.

Miles et al. (2014) included other techniques such as weighting the evidence. The idea behind weighting the evidence is that "data from some participants are 'better'" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 300). This technique was employed in this study because of the differences among data collected. For instance, some students interviewed provided greater detail in their answers the interview questions, whereas others provided less articulate answers. The same can be said of the document analysis with the various class assignments. Some took the assignments seriously and produced an end-product with high quality and rich data, while others did not.

Another method for demonstrating trustworthiness in this present study relates to the use of values coding. According to Saldaña (2009), using values coding across all data sources also provides trustworthiness because it "corroborates the coding" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 90) and checks for truthfulness and harmony among interviews, documents, and observations. In short, from the sampling approach to the data analysis, there were procedures to enhance the trustworthiness of this study.

Reflexivity

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed my positionality and potential biases toward this research agenda. I acknowledged an awareness of my own presence in the collection and analysis of this study's findings. Specifically with qualitative research, carrying out this reflexivity was challenging and, at times, it caused analysis to be a bit messy.

My positionality undoubtedly influenced the research. From my experiences and understanding of student affairs to personal attributes of mine left unsaid, these elements would have certainly played a role in data collection. What did participants feel comfortable sharing with someone like me? Did they filter what they shared? It is possible my physical appearance, communication style, and mere presence influenced the data collection process when interviewing students or observing SA 101. This may have caused some students to behave or communicate differently in my presence, and therefore, influenced the data collected. To help tease some of this out, I memoed after every interview and observation. The prompts utilized for this memoing activity called upon me to reflect on what I heard and saw, but also what I did not hear or see – and how this was related to my positionality. I asked myself what I was missing and how I might be able to compensate for that.

Similarly, data analysis surely was influenced by my positionality to some degree. My understanding of the field, various functional areas, as well as my knowledge of existing literature on this topic informed how I engaged with the data collected and what I read, saw, and heard throughout. I tried my best to let the data speak for itself using the trustworthiness strategies described in this chapter. When conducting my analysis, I focused a great deal on finding repetition of data among each individual student, then looked for patterns across all participants. This was made possible through the data collection timeline. I was able to analyze the data concurrent with collection, which allowed for natural and continual member checking and verifying. In this way, something observed in class or written about in an assignment could be discussed in an interview for additional context and verification. As the semester drew on, I created a profile for each student participant, as well as one for the course overall. Each time new data was collected, the profile was updated and color-coded to understand development over time. This is but one example of a strategy I utilized to accurately represent the experience of each participant, so as not to inject my own presence into the analysis.

In truth, it is impossible to know the full extent of my influence on the research. It is an intangible variable at play in both the data collection and data analysis. To some degree, this is the nature of qualitative research; however, it is no less important to enact measures to counteract this inherent bias. To compensate for this, I relied heavily on the use of the strategies for trustworthiness outlined in this chapter, including triangulation, member checking, verbatim transcription, weighting the evidence, and more.

Ethical Issues

With any study, researchers have ethical obligations and responsibilities to ensure the protection of participants and utmost integrity of the data itself and the overall research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Earlier in this chapter, I described my own positionality and epistemological perspective. Paying close attention to these areas ensured attention and acknowledgement of my unconscious bias. However, simply acknowledging these areas was not enough to ensure the ethical and academic integrity of this study. Actionable steps needed to be taken to ensure this study was conducted with attention to ethical standards and principles.

First and foremost, prior to the collection of data, I sought permission to conduct research with human subjects and was granted access to spaces I normally would not (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This included both formal and informal approvals. Informally, I needed approval from the instructors of SA 101 to conduct research, as this study required their assistance in several ways. More formally, approval was provided from the institutional review board at my institution, as well as appropriate approvals from the case institution. This was done to ensure proper protocols and procedures were followed with the research study. In addition, it provided another set of eyes on the study and methods, vetted for possible ethical issues, concerns over data collection and storage strategies, and most importantly, insured the safety of all participants.

While this study did not involve any danger for participants, safety was considered more broadly. Participant safety included gaining informed consent, maintaining privacy of the data, and providing an overall transparent data collection, analysis, and reporting processes. With this in mind, consent was collected from all participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I needed to get consent from the instructors, as well as from the students who will be interviewed and whose assignments will be analyzed. Additionally, consent needed to be affirmed with all other students in the class due to the observations taking place. In the event a student did not consent to participate, namely those merely in the observation-only category, I did not record data regarding that individual during the class observation portion of data collection.

As an additional measure of participant safety, pseudonyms were utilized in the reporting of data so as to remove any personal identifiers and maintain participant privacy. This included removing the institution name selected as the case from all forward-facing reports. Participant safety also included proper data storage procedures. For this study, all physical, hard-copy data were stored in a locked cabinet. Electronic data were secured through at least one password-protected authentication method. Access to data was restricted to myself only, as the sole researcher involved in data collection and analysis. As a whole, these measures worked together to maintain the privacy of participants.

When collecting data, particularly during observation and interviews, it was possible that I could step into something unexpected. It was a possibility that a student may discuss information outside of the realm of this study's parameters. I needed to be prepared to address and refer students to campus resources as needed. Given my active role in their course throughout the semester, it is likely that many of the undergraduate students saw me as an authority figure like their professor. Considering this, I had an ethical duty to assist students in distress in any way that I can. During the course of the interviews and observations, however, no such situations occurred.

In addition to data collection, data analysis must be performed with an attention to ethics and integrity. For instance, it was important for me, as the researcher, to be open to contrary findings, as well as to avoid preconceived positions and data exclusion (Yin, 2014; Yin, 2016). Having a dissertation committee to review the study and its results added a layer of ethical transparency and certainly helped to check my biases and assumptions – but it was primarily my responsibility to ensure that data collected were analyzed and presented objectively and truthfully. While there was certainly a substantial amount of data to sort through and report on, the use of both values coding and memoing assisted in this process to ensure an accurate and fair representation of the data.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this case study was to explore the role of SA 101 on the career development and trajectory of its students using SCCT as a framework. In this chapter, I spent time detailing my positionality as a researcher and addressed trustworthiness and possible ethical issues. I dedicated significant time in this chapter to describe the design, methods, and analysis of this single case study. The study focused on using a convergence of methods (observation, interviews, and document analysis) to richly describe the case itself, as well as multiple embedded units of analysis to further define and inform the case. The results of such a study have the opportunity to contribute to the literature around career development of aspiring student affairs practitioners. This study addressed an existing gap in the literature and provided significant details and greater understanding of courses like SA 101 and career development. In particular, researchers, faculty, and student affairs administrators will benefit from such data, as it has implications for students, faculty, and the profession overall.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the role SA 101 has on the career development and trajectory of its students. Using Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory, this study aimed to understand the degree to which students saw alignment between the student affairs profession and their own career goals and interests, as well as how their self-efficacy and outcome expectations toward a career in student affairs changed throughout SA 101. The following questions guided this research:

1. How did SA 101 contribute to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs?
2. In what ways did this course assist students in the development of self-efficacy in relation to their interest in pursuing a career in student affairs?
3. To what degree did students in SA 101 describe positive outcome expectations and personal goals aligning with a career in students affairs?
4. Following SA 101, why did (or didn't) students enrolled in SA 101 pursue a master's degree in student affairs and/or a career in student affairs?

The qualitative nature of this study produced a great deal of data to sift and sort through, to code, and report on. This is especially true given the case study methodology utilized to conduct this research, paired with the rich data from the multiple embedded units of analysis. Because the case was one single, academic course, I collected data on the course overall (e.g. syllabus review, observations) but also with respect to the individual experiences of several students within the course (e.g. interviews, assignment review). To best capture and represent the results from this study, this chapter has been organized to provide contextual information relevant to the host institution, case, and participants of the study. Then, I present the findings of the study in chronological order as career development occurred throughout the semester. These pieces contribute to an overarching analysis of the data using social cognitive career theory (SCCT).

Institutional Context

In order to contextualize and frame the results of this study, an understanding of the host institution and case study site location is of great importance. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the case selected for this study was one undergraduate course section of SA 101 that focused on introducing the field of student affairs to undergraduate students. The selected case was hosted by Century University, a mid-size, public, four-year institution in the Midwest. Founded in the late nineteenth century, Century University has a history of excellence in teacher education specifically. Today, the College of Education is the second-most populated College at the University. The institution boasts over 90 academic programs, more than 250 student clubs and organizations, and has several NCAA Division I athletic programs. The vast majority of the student body are in-state students whose home is within an hour of the campus. Despite this and paired with no formal requirement to live on campus, the campus is highly residential. In addition, there is a high transfer-in rate among students; however, enrollment had steadily decreased over the past ten years. Roughly 79% of graduating undergraduate students report employment post-graduation, with 19% seeking to continue their education. Century University is a predominantly White institution, with about 90% of the student body identifying as white and 87% of faculty and staff. The campus community has been working through issues surrounding this for the past year, with a recent effort aimed at addressing concerns from Students of Color who do not feel supported on campus. While there are a number of other contextual factors relevant to a full description of the institution, these are merely the most salient to contextualize the setting of the case: SA 101.

Case Context: SA 101

At Century University, SA 101 is an introduction to student affairs course for undergraduate students, where students explore the field throughout a 16-week semester. SA 101 was offered in the spring 2020 semester at Century University, running from mid-January to early-May. The course was held twice-a-week for 75 minutes. Twenty-one students were on the original roster of the class: seven seniors, seven juniors, six sophomores, and one freshman. With a primary audience of junior and senior-level students, the course is an elective for students and does not necessarily fulfill any degree requirement. SA 101 has traditionally been offered in both the fall and spring semesters, but as of late, the course has struggled to fill to its required enrollment in order to run the class. Though the instructors feel that the ideal class size is 15-20, administration generally requires 25 students to run the class.

The course itself was marketed to the students directly through advertisements on campus. Instructors also shared the course information to student affairs units across campus and encouraged professional staff to share the opportunity with students in their area. In addition, the instructors visited student organization meetings to market the class, and also shared course information with academic advisors working with students who may be interested. Many of the students in the course knew that SA 101 was tough to fill. One student shared that "the class almost didn't run so we were told to like, tell everyone we knew and stuff. So I posted it on my Facebook."

Students enroll in SA 101 for a variety of reasons. The majority of students were hoping to learn more about student affairs because they were considering it as a career possibility. Other students shared that they were undecided on their career, but were invited to consider enrolling in SA 101 by their academic advisor or one of the instructors of SA 101. A small number of students represent the extremes: (1) taking this class because they already know they are entering student affairs without a doubt or (2) enrolled in the course simply because they needed the "easy three credits" or "had time."

Generally speaking, the students enrolled in the course were involved on campus and that involvement was one factor to their enrollment in the course. As one instructor shared, "students in this course were the ones, for the most part, who are connected to campus." Involvement in this sense includes membership in a student club or organization, as well as on-campus employment (i.e. resident assistant, campus tour guide/orientation leader).

Instruction and Learning Outcomes

The course was team-taught by Ann and Oak, two current student affairs professionals at Century University. While both instructors got their start in the field in residence life, Ann now works in career services and Oak works in academic advising. It is worth noting that Ann and Oak are also married. This was Ann's third semester teaching SA 101, whereas, this was Oak's first teaching experience. By and large, the instructors of the course had full ownership of the learning objectives, flow, and content delivered as part of SA 101. The instructors shared that the course is not as rigorous as other upper level courses, but that they wanted the class to focus heavily on discussion in order to resemble what a student affairs master's-level course would look and feel like.

There were no stated learning outcomes or objectives for the class. When asked about this, both instructors shared their overall goal was to help students find a career path that suites them, regardless of if it is student affairs or not. In fact, a student determining student affairs was not right for them was seen as just as much of a success as a student articulating intentions to enter student affairs because the instructors' ultimate goal was to help student find a suitable career path regardless of the discipline. As Ann shared, "I want it to be that people have a positive experience and come away wanting to do this work. But I also see it as a success when a student says, 'you know, I took that class and I realized I don't really want to do student affairs.'" The instructors attempted to accomplish this goal through providing understanding of the profession itself and how to enter the field, as well as exposure to the variety of areas within student affairs, the different types of institutions, and overall how a university functions and why. A secondary goal for the instructors was to teach soft skills to their students, such as considering other perspectives, appropriate dialogue, and communication skills.

The class focused primarily on exposing students to the variety of functional units within student affairs, with some time devoted to graduate school preparation, the history of student affairs, and a brief introduction to student development theory. The instructors organized the syllabus in such a way that allowed for many outside presenters and guest speakers to join the class. Overall, the instructors of the course seemed to rely heavily on outside presenters – seeing their role as instructors of the class to be facilitators of learning rather than all-knowing experts. There was no textbook for the course; rather, the instructors utilized foundational articles (i.e. the Student Personnel Point of View) and timely, real-world articles to elicit class discussion.

An additional goal of the instructors for the class was to help students understand what it takes to be a student affairs professional. The instructors shared several competencies that, based on their professional experiences, one needs to be a successful student affairs professional, including self-awareness, communication, problem solving, understanding of diversity/inclusion, administrative ability, social skills, business-mindedness, and an ability to navigate campus politics. These competencies guided the formation of the syllabus and class materials, whether consciously or subconsciously.

The course syllabus reinforced these implicit learning outcomes for SA 101. Most of the assignments were reflective in nature and focused on the individual student's values and career goals. For example, assignments such as a professional competencies self-assessment, as well as the development of a personal statement to highlight the importance placed on reflection and self-awareness as contributing factors to career discernment. Assignments, paired with class readings and discussions, continually asked students to engage in discussion as to whether they could see themselves working in student affairs. Though the instructors included information on entering student affairs without a master's degree, most of the class content and assignments suggested graduate school was an important entry-point to the field.

According to the instructors, SA 101 contributed to students' career development. The course helped students decide if they were interested enough in student affairs to pursue it as a career by way of meeting practitioners across the campus. In this way, students saw the many different types of people engaging in student affairs work, from all backgrounds and educational disciplines while at the same time providing a "reality check" and expectation matching. In addition, the course helps students learn what it takes to get an entry-level student affairs job, as well as gather and ready documents for graduate school applications.

Student Participants

The participants in this study included the two instructors of SA 101, as well as a select sample of six students within the course itself. These six students were selected using purposeful sampling, as discussed in Chapter 3. In this case, I identified students with varying levels of commitment to pursuing student affairs as a career, while also attempting to select participants representative of Century University demographics as well as student affairs profession demographics as well. This provided me the opportunity to interview students in the course, all with varying levels of commitment and efficacy toward the idea of pursuing a career in student affairs. Before reporting on the findings of the study, this section provides a brief introduction to each of the six student participants.

Student Profiles

Caleb

Caleb was a 20-year-old, second-year, white male at Century University. On campus, Caleb served as a resident assistant, was involved in a fraternity, and, as a result of SA 101, applied for a job in admissions on campus. Despite his involvement, Caleb stated early on that he planned to transfer to another institution within the state to triple major in journalism, sports studies, and sport management. When asked why, Caleb said he felt the transfer would put him in a better position to learn more about sports management. Since he was young, Caleb had hoped his career would be tied to the sports industry – whether through team management, athletic operations, or sports reporting. He also expressed a strong desire to help others. For a brief time, Caleb changed his major to social work, thinking that aligned well with his desire to help others. He realized, however, that “social work just didn’t seem like my path.” Instead, he shared that “I really enjoyed working with other college students.” Caleb learned of student affairs after both positive and negative experiences with academic advisors. Caleb found out about SA 101 from his supervisor on campus and took the class to learn more about the scope of the profession and the various functional areas to find out if student affairs would be something he would enjoy.

Carrie

Carrie was a 22-year-old, white female and was a senior at Century University studying communications with a minor in theatre. Carrie worked on campus in the wellness center as a coder for the department’s website, while also serving as a library ambassador and being involved in her sorority. Carrie shared that these experiences, as well as her study abroad experience and academic advising, “sculpted” her collegiate experience and that these extracurricular experiences informed her life path. Carrie expressed that she changed her major many times, sharing her uncertainty with other professional paths. She was formerly an education major and recalls saying “Crap. I hate this.” Carrie went on to explain the power of a meeting she had with her advisor, how that led to changing her major to communications and eventually led to her interest in student affairs. Carrie found out about SA 101 from her twin sister who took the class the previous year. In addition, several of Carrie’s sorority sisters had also taken the course. Carrie was hoping to have taken the course in the fall semester, so that she could get the exposure and understanding of the field before applying to graduate schools, but the class was not offered in the fall semester. Despite already applying to student affairs graduate programs before the start of SA 101, Carrie saw this course as a way to get an overview of student affairs and the different functional areas, as well as an opportunity to network with current practitioners.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was a 21-year-old, Asian-American female and was a junior at Century University. She identified as a first-generation college student and was raised in a small town. Elizabeth articulated that her identities as a first-generation, Asian-American student “added an extra layer of adjustment (to college) that I was unprepared for.” Elizabeth worked in the career services office on campus and through this on-campus employment, she had been exposed to the field of student affairs. It is also how she found out about SA 101, since Ann, one of the instructors, also worked in career services. In her job on campus, Elizabeth has enjoyed "getting to interact with students and help them…in regards to finding careers or giving them advice." Elizabeth shared that she had a rocky start to her college experience, but articulated that as she attended classes, joined student organizations, and got her on-campus job, things began to turn around. "The more involved I became, the less flustered I felt, and the more my appreciation for my college experience grew."

Karina

Karina was a 19-year-old, Latina/Hispanic female. Karina identified herself as a first-generation student and described going through many obstacles and victories throughout her life. She shared, growing up, that she often helped her parents "by translating documents, calling to set appointments up, taking care of bills and my younger siblings." Karina delayed her entry into college by one semester because of a mix up with financial aid and the legal status of one of her parents. At the time of this study, Karina was a second-year student at Century University and was involved with several cultural-based student organizations. Karina did not know student affairs was a profession until she met someone the previous year who was studying in the student affairs master's program at Century. From taking SA 101, Karina hoped to learn about the different departments within student affairs and "what you can do within student affairs."

Lauren

Lauren was a 20-year-old, white female and a sophomore at Century University. Lauren was a communications major with a public relations minor. She was an in-state student, with her hometown being about two hours away from campus. Most of Lauren's family attended Century University. On campus, she was involved in her sorority as an executive board member and was also a peer mentor for first year students. In her peer mentorship role, Lauren serves as an upperclass role model and teaching assistant for first-year students within Century's first-year experience class. This is a year-long volunteer commitment. Lauren heard about the field of student affairs in her communications course from some of her faculty. Lauren took the SA 101 course to learn more about student affairs, and wanted to understand more about how the university runs, how student affairs connects to the business of running a university, and overall to network and learn from current practitioners on campus.

Roadie

Roadie was a 20-year-old, white female and was a junior at Century University. Roadie was a history major and worked in admissions as a student processing specialist, doing some data entry but also working with transfer students as a student advisor. Roadie was a transfer student herself, having spent her first year and a half of college at a different institution. In her personal statement, Roadie noted "I was terribly unhappy at [sic] my university and needed to leave." Roadie would later articulate her transfer experience as a defining moment in her college and career journey. Roadie learned about the student affairs profession from her advisors. She was drawn to the idea of working as an academic advisor. She decided to enroll in SA 101 so she could learn more about the different areas of student affairs outside of admissions.

Semester Overview

I designed this study so that data collection took place in a chronological sequence over the course of a sixteen-week semester. This was done in order to understand SA 101's unique contributions on career development as a learning experience over a set period of time. To provide a sense for the importance of this sequence as well as career development over time, this next section provides analysis of the data with respect to the research questions as development happened chronologically. This section has three parts, each representing about six weeks of the semester: beginning, middle, and end. Presenting results in this way allowed for an understanding of self-efficacy and outcome expectation development throughout SA 101 and provided insight on important contextual variables.

Beginning (Weeks 1 to 6)

The first six weeks of the semester provided a number of opportunities for students in the class to dive into the basics of the student affairs profession. From a data collection standpoint, the beginning of the semester called for a classroom observation, an individual interview with each of the six student participants, and the review of two assignment submissions – a personal statement and a professional competencies self-assessment. These data collection points offered me a baseline understanding of the course, as well as the student participants. Overall, the beginning of the semester in SA 101 was much like any other course – a general introduction to the course topic and a honeymoon phase. With the help of course material, assignments, and discussions, students formed their initial understanding of the field of student affairs and noted all the ways in which the profession would be the right fit for them.

At the beginning of the semester, many student participants felt positively about entering the field of student affairs and even had specific functional areas of interest. For instance, Roadie, Carrie, and Caleb articulated specific interest areas within student affairs. Roadie was strongly interested in admissions, Carrie in academic advising for undecided students, and Caleb in student athlete academic advising. Each had a hard time seeing themselves outside of those particular functional areas if entering student affairs. This confidence seemed to be informed by past experiences and belief that each could do the job – at least the job they thought they understood.

On the other hand, Lauren and Karina both shared they were undecided about the field of student affairs. At that time, Lauren said "I just have a lot of interests right now…I'm just kind of like still figuring that out." When the course first started, she did not feel she had enough information to make a decision, but hoped that SA 101 would provide her more information. Karina felt similarly and used this course to explore what it would be like to work in student affairs. In general, Karina was looking for a future career where she could help others, sharing that she wanted "to repay what other people have taught me." She had a particular interest in social justice education. In her personal statement, Karina articulated why student affairs might be right for her.

> I want to be able to help underrepresented students as well as first-generation because I can relate to all the expectations that are set on someone when it's time

> to go to college. I can relate to the obstacles that are set to make someone “fail.” I want to be an advocate for minorities because I know what it’s like to go into a class and not talk. After all, you feel like your opinions or perspectives don’t matter, don’t hold value. I want students to express themselves and their culture. I want them to be proud of their identity and that they are powerful and phenomenal. I want to pass down my knowledge to help others out and achieve their goals.

As the semester continued on and the honeymoon phase ended, students started to learn more about the specifics of the student affairs profession. Class readings, discussions, and guest presenters helped paint a picture of what student affairs looks like as a profession and what it would take to succeed in the field. This knowledge and further understanding of student affairs served as a mechanism for students to develop realistic outcome expectations with respect to a career in student affairs. In this way, we begin to see the start of SCCT at work in SA 101. Each student took this newfound understanding and information to reflect on how their skills aligned with a career in student affairs. Elizabeth, for instance, felt she possessed the skills needed to be successful in student affairs. She saw her strengths in her desire to help others and her business mindset. Elizabeth stressed the importance of communication and collaboration in student affairs, skills she felt she possessed. She specifically called out her experiences working on campus in career services and serving on the executive board of a student organization as a means by which she honed her competence in communication, interpersonal skills, and working on a diverse team.

At this point, we began to see the first reflections that point to development of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in relation to a career in student affairs. Near the end of the first six weeks, students completed a professional competencies self-assessment. The assessment, from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), assessed six professional competencies needed to be career-ready, including communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills, leadership, creativity and problem solving, professionalism and productivity, and global perspective. The assessment required students to rank their competency using the following scale (1) Excelling, (2) Currently developing, and (3) Needs to develop. Through this assignment, students began to critically assess their skillset and how it aligned with a career in student affairs. For example, Lauren felt she had the skills necessary to be a successful student affairs professional, yet understood she always had room to grow. Lauren felt that she was currently developing or excelling in each of the six areas. One exception was in the area of global perspectives, where Lauren rated herself as needs to develop. She hoped to "attend events for things I am less comfortable in (example: political groups, bible study, etc.)." Roadie also felt she needed to develop in global perspectives. She felt this was the most important competency for student affairs professionals. Roadie reflected on her shortcomings in this area. In her assignment reflection, Roadie wrote, "I think this is my lowest competency. I have a tendency to only focus on certain perspectives."

These first six weeks provided a foundation on which the rest of the semester would be built. As the semester continued, the honeymoon phase ended. Some students doubled-down on student affairs as their chosen profession, while other students wrestled with the realities of the profession that seem inconsistent with their previous understanding. Their outcome expectations changed as a result of the SA 101 learning experience – some positively and some negatively. These first weeks provided important contextual elements to understand the career development of each student enrolled in SA 101. Specifically, data collected from the beginning of the semester was used to compare development of self-efficacy and outcome expectations overtime as the semester continued.

Middle (Weeks 7 to 12)

The middle six weeks of the semester ran from late February 2020 to the first week of April 2020. During this period of time, SA 101 students were in the thick of learning about specific functional units, discussed relevant current events ("hot topics") and case studies, and also researched student affairs graduate programs and created drafts of their application materials. As far as data collection goes, I conducted a second classroom observation in late February and the second round of student interviews took place in early March 2020. This section also discusses the influence the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) had on SA 101 and the learning experience of the students enrolled.

As a continuation from the beginning of the class, the middle part of SA 101 provided students further understanding of the skills needed to be a successful student affairs professional. This knowledge and further understanding of the profession assisted students in their career development, specifically as it related to forming realistic outcome expectations. To this point, students had heard from a variety of sources – guest speakers, instructors, peers, readings, and so forth – all of which influenced their understanding of the skills needed to be successful. Caleb, for example, expanded his earlier definition of student affairs, as well as what he believed it took to be successful in the profession. In his mid-semester interview, Caleb shared that student affairs professionals need to keep an open mind and also be “able to problem solve and…able to sympathize with those people, just being very people oriented” because you “never know what will come through the door.” Similarly, Elizabeth demonstrated further understanding of the skills needed. In her second interview mid-semester, Elizabeth expanded on areas she thought were important skills for student affairs professionals, including communication, interpersonal skills/teamwork, being empathetic, “willingness to advocate for students and stand up for them when needed,” being a person who wants to help others, and being “very open and approachable and considerate of all different types of people and understand that people don’t have the same experiences as you so they don’t see things the same way that you do.” These two examples demonstrate advancement in understanding of the profession among students in the SA 101, particularly with how their expectations of the field aligned with reality. With greater understanding, students started to develop informed outcome expectations and to comment on their confidence in pursing student affairs.

By the middle portion of SA 101, students began to articulate both confidence and doubt in their decision to enter the field of student affairs. These experiences contributed to each student’s self-efficacy toward a career in student affairs. Carrie and Lauren both articulated confidence in pursuing student affairs as a career. As a senior, Carrie was at a different stage in life than the other five students in the sample. Carrie had already applied for student affairs graduate programs when SA 101 began. Early in the semester, Carrie knew she had been accepted into a graduate program, but had not yet interviewed for an assistantship. During her mid-semester interview for this study, Carrie had completed her graduate assistantship interview and had a very positive experience while on campus. Carrie's interactions with current graduate students, practitioners, and faculty during her assistantship interview helped her articulate the importance of teamwork and interpersonal skills for student affairs practitioners. "If you don't have interpersonal skills you can't succeed in the field. And if you can't work on teams then…there's no one-woman show really. So you have to be able to cultivate and work with teams." Carrie believed she had the skills necessary to cultivate those relationships and collaborate with others – all in the name of student success.

While at a very different stage in her journey, Lauren also shared her confidence in pursuing student affairs as her chosen profession. By the second interview mid-semester, Lauren felt she more than likely would enter the field of student affairs, demonstrating an increased interest and commitment to this career path. She felt she had more information than she did before, but still yearned for more.

> I think I really, really like it [student affairs] and I still want to learn more though. I don't think I can say I'm 100% yet…I think I would just want to try more things that are out of my comfort zone.

Lauren planned to use the remaining two years of her undergraduate experience to gather more information by way of having new experiences to ensure she would be ready for the graduate school application process. For example, she applied to be an ambassador for the admissions department and also sought out job shadowing experiences with an academic advisor at a college close to home. These examples demonstrate advancement in self-efficacy for both Carrie and Lauren, in part because of the material presented in SA 101. The course provided an intentional opportunity for students like Carrie and Lauren to learn about the field and to grow in their understanding of the realities of the profession. Beyond just understanding, SA 101 presented an opportunity for students to actively reflect on their personal values and how they see alignment between their values and the profession's values. For Carrie and Lauren, SA 101 afforded them opportunities to see such alignment.

Caleb and Roadie demonstrated their continued interest in the field by pursuing specific actions to help aid in their career development, specifically their decision-making process. Caleb, for instance, set his sights on gaining additional student affairs experience. He applied for a student worker job in admissions to learn more about the field and also explored internship opportunities at his new school in athletic advising and a position as a student manager with the women's basketball team – experiences he pursued as a result of connections he made to SA 101 guest presenters. Roadie also sought out new experiences to help grow her skillset. For example, Roadie completed Century's LBGT ally training in effort to increase her knowledge and understanding. When asked about this in her mid-semester interview, Roadie expanded and shared "I feel like it'd be hard for me to advise [students from diverse backgrounds] if you don't know where they come from. I think knowing more backgrounds definitely would help."

For Caleb and Roadie, these actions represent an element of the SCCT framework and career development at play. When considering these tangible steps in the context of SCCT, it is evident these are examples of choice actions. Choice actions are the actual steps taken to implement a career choice selection and the results of such actions are performance attainments. Both actions and attainments support (or weaken) self-efficacy and outcome expectations, and by extension, ultimately influence career choice persistence (Lent et al., 1994). In the SCCT framework, Lent et al. referred to this as a feedback loop, where “products of earlier career-relevant behavior serve to confirm or redirect future career choices” (Lent et al., 1994, p. 96). The students in SA 101, in particular Caleb and Roadie’s experiences in the middle of the semester, demonstrate the feedback loop proposed as part of the SCCT model.

While some students experienced advancements in self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations, other students in SA 101, like Elizabeth, began to question their interest in the student affairs profession. SA 101 continued to showcase the elements of the field that Elizabeth felt she would enjoy, but also highlighted areas she was not sure she was as excited about. In her mid-semester interview, Elizabeth shared:

> The class has just kind of exposed me to…the different, maybe not exciting parts of student affairs, not that they’re bad, but there’s certain aspects of it that sometimes you like to look at things through your rose colored glasses and you don’t really look at the things that maybe you wouldn’t enjoy in a job…I’ve kind of seen some of those things that have made me question, ‘Are those things that I’m willing to work through and challenge myself to do or not?’

Some of these items relate to the perceived low compensation of student affairs professionals. Other elements that she has learned more about and had her uncertain about student affairs include retention issues, the value proposition of higher education, and a perception that student affairs was not valued on the campus.

Not only did she begin to uncover aspects of the profession she may not enjoy, Elizabeth's comments alluded to decreased self-efficacy with respect to a career in student affairs. This waning self-efficacy dampened her interest and confidence in pursuing the student affairs profession. One example of this was her concern that she did not have the skills to help others from different backgrounds. She asked herself, "how can I help students whose situations I don't understand from a personal point of view?" Elizabeth did not believe she had the experience to work through all of the situations student affairs professionals find themselves working through.

> I feel like I haven't been exposed to the students that struggle like really, really badly or with certain issues that I never have been exposed to and so sometimes that scares me because I'm like, I don't know if I'm cut out to talk to people that are struggling with suicide or that are dealing with the mental health issues that are very serious.

Elizabeth went on to share "I just don't think I have enough experience to confidently say, 'Yes, I could do that in my job.'" It goes beyond skill, but speaks to low self-efficacy for certain elements of the job. Because self-efficacy is the cornerstone of career development within the SCCT framework, it became difficult for Elizabeth to see herself working in student affairs. Self-efficacy asks the question, "can I do this?" Considering

Elizabeth's answers mid-semester, it is clear she had doubts about her ability to answer 'yes' to this important question.

While Elizabeth was the most forthcoming regarding her concerns with a career in student affairs, she was not alone. Karina and Caleb also shared uncertainty with student affairs mid-semester. Karina remained undecided, but articulated in her second interview that she was leaning more towards the social work track. "I'm still stuck between student affairs and social work since they do kind of do the same thing, but one is more intense [social work] than the other [student affairs]. I don't know. I'll have to see after I finish this course." Karina does not articulate what influenced her decision in this moment other than just her overall feelings. However, based on what Karina shared earlier in the semester, it would seem her interest in social work was simply stronger and more specific. In her first interview, Karina described her passion for social work and specific interest in "international social work or social work that helps Women of Color or children that are going through rough things," as well as teens that go through the juvenile justice system. From the SCCT framework, her specific interests in social work were born out of self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations for a career in social work. This career interest, in turn, influenced career goals that led her toward social work and away from student affairs.

Caleb shared similar sentiments. Though he vocalized his excitement and confidence in pursuing student affairs, there were times during the semester where he questioned student affairs as the right path for him. During his mid-semester interview, Caleb shared "I've considered a lot more of if I want to go into the journalism side of the sports industry or if I want to go into the people side, I guess. Been contemplating that a lot more." Unlike Elizabeth, Caleb was not wavering due to a lack of self-efficacy, but rather was attempting to discern between two career options both of interest to him. From a SCCT lens, he perceived himself as capable of performing well in either field, and as such, he utilized the learning experience of SA 101 to further define and explore his career interests. Caleb described how he spent a lot of time looking into student affairs programs, what it would take, how far he would be from his family, how much graduate school would cost, and more. These elements of career decision making were pieces he had not thought about previously. "I didn't really think about coming into the class or coming in, how much of an impact [these elements] would make." As these examples portray, the career development process is not linear. In fact, as proposed by Lent et al. (1994), career development from a lens of SCCT is cyclical and informed by exposure to more information. The positive experiences outlined, as well as the experiences that left students feeling hesitant, represent that natural part of the career development process.

Role of Classmates

The middle of the semester also gave credence to the influence of fellow classmates and peers on the learning experience in SA 101 and, by extension, the career development process. While the instructors certainly provided a framework for meaningful interactions with peers in the class, the students ultimately decided how this would play out, what their relationship would be like with one another, and to what degree they would participate. In this case, the format meshed well with the personalities and learning styles of those in the class. According to Carrie, SA 101 developed into a community of learners centered around their shared interest in pursuing student affairs. Caleb also articulated this, saying that he felt like there was more of a personal connection among students in the class. Ann shared similar thoughts from her perspective as an instructor of the course. “Almost everybody would participate in some way and they were really respectful of each other, even while sharing different opinions.” For some students in the class, this style was a new experience. As Elizabeth shared, “I haven’t really been in classes that were that discussion-based… it honestly threw me off a little bit.” Roadie, a history major, experienced something similar, sharing that in her history coursework, she does not often get to engage in discussions or hear different experiences from her peers. In SA 101, Roadie shared “we discuss more and you get a lot more real-world perspectives. Like in history, they don’t have any guest speakers or anyone that’s in the field to come in.”

Many students commented that class discussions affected their learning experience in SA 101. The effect, however, was not simply because they were speaking up in class, but because the discussions highlighted the different perspectives and experiences of each student in the classroom. In this way, the course manifested a professional value of the field of student affairs. Lauren appreciated the diversity in grade levels and the wide range of ages and experiences. “I like that I can learn in that way from them because they’ve been through more college than I have or been at different institutions, so I think perspective is the biggest thing.” She reiterated this later in the semester, stating “the variety of classmates was something that I don’t think you get in other classes, like all grades, all majors.” Roadie too appreciated the diversity in the class, offering perspective she had not thought about before (i.e. experiences of first-generation students, fraternity and sorority members, etc.). Elizabeth took this one step further, and articulated how the discussions with her classmates informed her perspectives and increased her understanding of the diverse experiences of others.

> I haven't considered a lot of other people's journeys and how they are affected as much, so that's been really cool and I think that the different ideas and thoughts that they bring to class have taught me a lot just in how different the student populations are that I could be working with one day.

For Elizabeth, she was not used to being around individuals with such different opinions than herself or people willing to speak their mind. Through SA 101, she identified that such dialogue was valued in student affairs, which in turn assisted in Elizabeth's own career development process.

> My peers kind of opened my eyes to, well, these are the type of people that you would be helping or working with in this field, and these are the type of issues that you would have to be discussing in this field. So, do you want to be tackling these issues? Do you want to be having these conversations with these people? I think that really helped me reflect on whether or not that's something I would want to do in my job or not.

Elizabeth's comments best illustrate the career development taking place during classroom discussions. Using SCCT, I contend that classroom discussions served as a contextual influence directly effecting career interest, choice goals, and choice actions. These discussions highlighted important professional values within the field of student affairs including dialogue, empathy, and inclusion. The experience forced students to reflect on whether these values and experiences were ones they felt aligned with their career interests and abilities.

COVID Pivot

I interviewed all six student participants for their mid-semester interview in early March, a week or so ahead of an announcement that would change the remainder of the semester. In mid-March 2020, Century University, like many institutions across the country, announced changes that would influence the remainder of the spring 2020 semester due to the onset of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Similar to other higher education institutions, Century moved to online/remote teaching and learning for the last seven weeks of the spring semester. As Oak shared, he had not prepared for SA 101 to exclusively move to remote delivery – though he shared that would be an important piece to consider for future offerings of the course. The instructors' approach for the class was to move to a once-a-week synchronous meeting format using Zoom video conferencing. They scaled back the discussion elements of the course, but kept the assignments the same.

Based on conversations with the instructors, students, and my observations of the remote-delivery of the course itself, the move to remote instruction resulted in a substantial loss in the amount of class discussion and peer-to-peer learning that took place. Part of this was a result due to Ann and Oak's decision to "pair the class down to the bare-minimum because we didn't want it to be a class that was a burden to the students during a stressful time." The instructors merged several class sessions, cancelled others, and overall moved to synchronous remote delivery of SA 101. Several students, including Carrie, Roadie, Karina, and Lauren, noted that SA 101 was their only class to keep any sort of synchronous class session via Zoom video conferencing.

Despite keeping a synchronous element to SA 101, both students and instructors noticed the stark differences between their in-person experience as compared to their remote learning experience. Given that the class focused heavily on discussion, there was an understanding that it would simply not be possible to replicate the in-person experience. As Oak shared, "people were more timid to participate than they were when we were in person…it's easier to interrupt people on Zoom and it's just not as nice for group discussion." Ann shared that she felt the conversation suffered in the Zoom setting. The students felt similarly. Roadie, for example, said that the class discussions online were just not as good and there were times the class sat in "awkward silence." Elizabeth reiterated this idea saying, "I think in Zoom calls especially, everyone feels like they don't have to talk, or they don't want to talk over other people, so nobody talks." Participation certainly looked different in a Zoom class session than the previous observations in-person. Later in the semester when I conducted my final two observations via Zoom, there were very few individuals who had their video on for the duration of the class. All students were muted when they were not speaking, with some only utilizing the text chat feature and others who showed no signs of engagement at all.

Several students noted the challenge of distance learning as a mismatch to their preferred learning style, especially after abruptly moving back home in many cases. This was true for Karina who said "I'm more of an in-person learner" so being online has been more challenging and led to more procrastination on her part. Karina also shared that doing school from home was tough due to internet speed and having two younger siblings also trying to do schoolwork. Elizabeth echoed Karina's comments about the challenge of distance learning. Elizabeth found it difficult to concentrate in class online as opposed to in-person. In addition, she felt the experience in SA 101 was impacted. "I feel like it just lessened the learning experience in a way." She cited that the instructors combined classes and just could not reproduce the discussion the way it was when the class was in-person. "It just wasn't the same interaction."

End (Weeks 13 to 17)

Despite the pandemic, the semester continued. The final six weeks of the course certainly looked different than originally planned. While SA 101 shifted online, I continued to collect data, including two virtual classroom observations, Zoom-based final interviews with both the instructors and the students, and collected and analyzed the final reflection assignment. Instead of visiting or observing in-person on campus, the students, the instructors, and myself all joined from our various locations across the Midwest. As was described earlier, it was noticeably different; however, students nonetheless described several noteworthy conclusions as a result of enrolling in SA 101, including a greater understanding of the different functional areas within student affairs, greater knowledge base for the graduate school experience, and the opportunity to network with current student affairs professionals. This section reviews the semester as a whole and considers examples from the entire semester to report on course themes and messages at the conclusion of the experience. In this way, the end of the course provided greater clarity regarding the career development taking place throughout the semester.

Overarching Themes and Messages from SA 101 Content

Considering the case as a whole and all of the data collected throughout the semester, several themes and messages appeared over and over across data sources with respect to SA 101 course content. It seems natural to explore these themes and messages here at the end of the course as all of the data points have been collected and analyzed. The results of this saturation are reflected in the following section. The themes that seem to transcend all data sources are an understanding of the skills needed in student affairs, realities of the profession, and an overall reflection on personal abilities and values. All three are interconnected and related, particularly in light of SCCT; however, they are distinctly described in this section to provide further understanding of the effect of SA 101's content on the career development process that culminated with the conclusion of the course. This section presents the themes with a cursory nod to their relationship to SCCT, while the final section of this chapter extensively explores connections to SCCT throughout the semester.

Skills Needed in Student Affairs. The first theme emerging from the end of the semester focused on the skills needed for an individual to be successful in student affairs. This theme was evident across the data – in student interviews, instructor interviews, class observations, course readings, and more. At its core, this theme encapsulates the need to understand what student affairs is and what is required of those in the field. As Karina said, as a result of SA 101, "I took away what they [student affairs professional] do, what their job description is because honestly I just thought that they help students, but it's much more than that." Karina's statement represents the experience of students within this study. All students in the sample expressed that SA 101 provided them exposure to the field and also an understanding of what student affairs professionals actually do. Throughout the semester, the student participants were asked to define student affairs in their own words. These definitions evolved overtime, as did their understanding of the skills needed to be a student affairs professional.

The skills needed to be a successful student affairs professional were communicated to students in SA 101 in a variety of ways. The syllabus, for example, highlighted several student affairs values and skills needed within the field. Skills in collaboration and communication were reflected in the required functional unit presentation, as well as the interview assignment. Course assignments also provided insight on the skills needed to be in student affairs. The professional competencies self-assessment was one such assignment. This assignment conveyed messages regarding the professional competencies needed to be a successful student affairs professional. The assessment, created by NACE, was to be used to "see what professional competencies you need to develop and practice to be career-ready and experience workplace success." The self-assessment emphasized six professional competencies including communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills, leadership, creativity and problem solving, professionalism and productivity, and global perspective. The tool provided the definitions for each competency and asked students to reflect on their strengths in these areas, as well as their areas for growth. Certainly this tool also conveyed specific skills needed for student affairs professionals and contributed to students' understanding of their own efficacy toward the skills needed to succeed as a student affairs professional.

Course readings also were a source for information regarding what it takes to be a student affairs professional. Two articles were used specifically for current event discussions within SA 101. Both readings reported stories of colleges who were under fire for recent decisions made on their campus. These articles conveyed to students that student affairs professionals are sometimes put in tough, very public situations and will need to be able to hear both praise and criticism from multiple outlets and sources. It further conveyed the need to critically think through and make informed decisions, knowing that sometimes social media and public opinion can drive the decision-making process.

Another course document utilized by the instructors to assist in student learning was the review of several position descriptions of leadership positions at Century University. These six senior-level administrative position descriptions conveyed the skills needed for individuals to advance in student affairs in the future. All of the position descriptions required skills in communication, leadership, supervision, strategic planning, collaboration, budgeting, policy development, and continuous development. In addition, four included commitment and understanding related to diversity and inclusion. Seeing all of these skills across all position descriptions sent a message related to what it takes to be successful in student affairs, as well as what skills are needed to advance in the profession. The position descriptions also highlighted the minimum credentials needed to be eligible for such positions – with two requiring doctoral degrees, one master's, and three bachelor's. All credential requirements were paired with a minimum number of years of prior professional experience. These documents, intentionally or unintentionally, provided students important context and understanding on what it takes to be a successful student affairs professional, as well as what skills are needed to advance in the field. This information and context assisted students in the development of self-efficacy and realistic outcome expectations.

Outside of SA 101 documents and readings, I sought insight on this topic from the instructors of the course. At the beginning and end of the course, the instructors were asked what competencies or skills they felt it took to be successful student affairs professionals. Ann and Oak emphasized skills in self-awareness, communication, problem solving, understanding of diversity, inclusion, and privilege, an awareness of the student affairs field in general, administrative ability, social skills, a sense for business, as well as the ability to navigate campus politics. It is important to understand the perspective of the instructors on this matter because Ann and Oak were the primary drivers of the course learning objectives and creators of the class structure, readings, and assignments. Their opinion on the skills needed likely influenced the direction of the class, as well as the class materials. At the end of the course, when asked if the instructors felt SA 101 contributed to students' understanding of the skills necessary to work in student affairs, Oak shared

> I'd say we definitely hit all of those things at different points and talked about the importance of them, but I don't think we necessarily taught them. I don't feel like

> they all have those skills now to go on to student affairs. I just think they know that these are skills that are needed.

This is an important distinction. The instructors felt they did a sufficient job highlighting the skills necessary but did not necessarily provide experiences to develop those skills.

Given all of the messaging around what it takes to be a student affairs professional, the most telling piece of this analysis are the skills the actual students identified on their own as a result of taking the course. Throughout their individual interviews during SA 101, the top five most mentioned skills needed to be successful in student affairs were to have an understanding of student needs and psychology/development, an openness and understanding of different backgrounds, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and a passion for helping others. As a result of SA 101, paired with students' experiences and outside knowledge, these are the skills they felt were needed to be successful in the field. The list of these skills represented an informal learning product from SA 101, while also helping to understand the career development activities taking place as a result of the learning experience. This understanding assisted students in their career development by specifically informing self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The course content outlined the skills needed and provided students the opportunity to reflect on whether they felt they could do the job (self-efficacy), as well as whether they'd be successful if they did pursue the field (outcome expectations). Without this knowledge base cultivated throughout the semester, it would be difficult to move through Lent et al.'s (1994) model.

Realities of Student Affairs. Beyond the skills needed to be a successful student affairs professional, throughout the semester, SA 101 supplied students with information on the realities of life as a student affairs practitioner. This content included information from first-hand sources on the various functional areas within student affairs, the everyday realities of life as a student affairs professional, as well as information on experiences needed, including academic credentials. These experiences helped students develop realistic, informed career-related decisions.

Functional Areas. A large function of SA 101, as planned by the instructors and experienced by the students, was exposure to the many different functional areas within student affairs. The instructors hoped to design learning experiences that would showcase the many different areas of student affairs in order to provide students the most complete review of the profession. Many students in the study noted their exposure to areas they had not previously been aware of. In her final interview for this study, Carrie, for example, discussed the importance of her exposure to other areas. She specifically noted that she was unfamiliar with the role of the dean of students office. Lauren reiterated this idea, but highlighted exposure to the disability services office. These are but a few examples of the many provided throughout the data collection process. For the instructors, this was a critical function of the course. At the conclusion of the semester, Oak felt they were successful in their goal to draw attention to the many functional areas within the profession. In my wrap-up interview with Oak, he said "I think we were successful in kind of showing them [the students] a variety of different student affairs experiences and functional units."

This exposure extended beyond understanding the functional areas themselves to also include a message that, regardless of the unit you work in, you need to know a little bit about a lot of different areas. Many of the students articulated this message exactly the same. For instance, Caleb shared "finding out a lot about a little bit of everything" was necessary for student affairs professionals. In fact, during the third classroom observation, two students presented on financial aid as a functional area in student affairs. After the presentation, Caleb shared that while he could not see himself working in financial aid, he articulated a need to understand it. This message was also reflected in the experiences of Lauren and Elizabeth. Lauren shared "a lot of our speakers say to get involved in different things and learn a little about a lot of things." Elizabeth shared similar sentiments in her final interview. "You might not be able to help a student, but you need to know who can help that student." It would seem that a critical takeaway for the students in SA 101 relate to the expectation that student affairs professionals need to be knowledgeable about a variety of topics, but do not necessarily need to be the expert. This is not necessarily a skill, but rather, a reality for those in student affairs.

Academic Credentials. Another message reiterated fairly precisely across students in the sample was related to the credentials needed to be a student affairs professional. Over the course of the semester the students in SA 101 learned that they did not need a specific undergraduate degree to enter student affairs. This was something that Caleb was worried about when I spoke to him during his first interview. However, as the semester continued, he had learned that his undergraduate major would not prevent him from pursuing a career in student affairs. This point was reinforced during the interview

Caleb conducted with a current student affairs practitioner. He said “the person I interviewed said that she went through social work and gerontology, and she’s working in athletics. So just having that master’s degree got her that much farther.” Karina communicated learning a similar message. By the end of the semester, Karina learned more about student affairs and what education she may need to be successful in student affairs. “You don’t have to do your undergrad for higher education, you know? You just go to your master’s and get your master’s in higher education. I thought that was pretty cool.”

Despite communicating to students that a specific undergraduate degree was not needed, SA 101 very much included a strong message around attaining a master’s degree in student affairs. The instructors did their best to infuse non-graduate school narratives in the class; however, neither Oak nor Ann had that experience. Both instructors held the viewpoint that a master’s degree would provide greater opportunities for students interested in the student affairs profession. Oak shared

> We definitely talked…about the options and possibilities there, but I think…I mean the eventual goal is for them…if you’re really going to go into student affairs…go to grad school, because it is tough to get far in student affairs without a master’s degree.

This message was received clearly by those in the course. Both Caleb and Karina’s earlier examples suggest a need for that master’s degree. Caleb articulated this even further in his final interview, saying that “graduate school is just going to teach you the basics that you need to know that will help you prepare for the field.” There certainly were conversations about pathways to student affairs that did not include graduate school; however, they were fewer in number and were certainly not the overall focus for the class.

In this way, SA 101 provided valuable insight into the world of graduate school, specifically related to student affairs master's degree programs. Oak shared that he felt SA 101 was successful in "giving them [the students] a sneak peek of what graduate school might look like." The experiences highlighted by the students at the end of the semester confirm Oak's assessment. Caleb articulated that, "I've learned a lot about the different areas, learned a lot about how to strengthen my resume, how to apply, which is something I didn't think about, is how the applications differ between undergrad and graduate." Carrie identified similar learning experiences. In addition to learning more about the different areas within student affairs, Carrie felt SA 101 exposed her to additional information on graduate school logistics, including the differences between assistantships and internships, the different specializations among student affairs graduate programs (i.e. social justice, research, practitioner, policy, etc.). In Carrie's final interview, she shared that SA 101 was the only class that she has enrolled in that "prepares you to apply for a [graduate] program." By the end of SA 101, Lauren felt similarly and shared the class helped her feel more confident in the graduate school application process.

> I think it [SA 101] made me a lot confident going forward with the next steps part. Having to write a personal statement and having to look at grad schools and make a resume. I think when I'm looking more seriously into schools I have a

> starting point already and I'll have something to bring into career services and spruce up a little bit before I actually send anything out. So I think that is something that the class really gave me that I don't think I would have gotten anywhere else.

Lauren's comments seemed to confirm Carrie's review, sharing "[SA 101] made the idea [of graduate school] seem way less scary. When I start to seriously look at schools, I will have a good starting point from these assignments." Lauren went on to share that SA 101 provided a space for her to hear from current student affairs graduate students, their stories, experiences, and advice.

Given the importance of anticipated positive outcome expectations, a view into the world of graduate school was important, specifically because graduate school is often touted as the proper entry point to a career in student affairs. SA 101 provided students a solid foundation for understanding the application process, assistantships, as well as what the classroom may be like as a graduate student. Anticipating and forecasting these experiences allowed students the chance to reflect on career fit.

Daily Realities of the Profession. Not only did SA 101 expose students to the various functional areas and possible graduate programs, the course provided real life examples of what it means to work in the field of student affairs. The instructors were open and honest with their students about the ups and downs of the profession. In many ways, this provided a check on students' expectations and allowed for the opportunity to compare those expectations to the current realities for those in the field. Much of the expectations-matching occurred on an individual basis and often related to the skills needed to be in students affairs, as well as the functions of the field (i.e. what you would actually be responsible for on a daily basis). This was possible due, in large part, to the addition of guest presenters within the classroom. Between the instructors, guest presenters, course readings, assignments, and discussions, students learned about the similarities and differences in order to balance their expectations vs. the reality of the field.

One such expectation versus reality related to financial realities in the field of student affairs. For the most part, students learned about the compensation benefits for student affairs practitioners. Junior and senior students in SA 101 seemed to articulate greater interest and attention to projected salary information. Caleb, for example, learned through SA 101 that the "pay obviously it's not going to be there. It's not going to be six figures. I'll never make six figures." Instead, Caleb weighed the realities of the situation and found that he placed greater value on a fulfilling career than the salary figure. "To me, being happy and having a good career is a lot better than making millions of dollars." Elizabeth, on the other hand, worried that a student affairs salary would not be able to sustain the lifestyle she hoped to live "to one day satisfy my needs and a family's needs." Caleb was able to reconcile this new information and move forward, whereas Elizabeth ultimately decided to explore other career interests outside of student affairs. The instructors would call this a win. As Ann shared in her first interview, she wants her students to have a positive experience and "come away wanting to do this work. But I also see it as a success when a student says, 'you know, I took that class and I realized I don't really want to do student affairs.'"

Reflection on Personal Abilities and Values. A final theme that was evident at the end from the coded data of this study was the alignment of personal abilities and values. With each required skill communicated in the course readings and discussions, students cycled back-and-forth throughout the semester, attempting to understand how their current skillset could satisfy the abilities needed to be successful in student affairs. This alignment of personal abilities was largely reflected through the interviews with individual students, as well as their assignment submissions. There are examples throughout the student interviews that provide insight on this topic. In large part, students described examining their perceived abilities to determine where they see alignment with their ability and the abilities and skills needed to be successful in student affairs. These are instances were SCCT concepts are on full display. Self-efficacy grew among students in SA 101 when their perceived abilities matched the skills and attributes required of student affairs professionals. Likewise, students described positive outcome expectations when they anticipated favorable results upon attempting a situation they believe to be within the purview of a student affairs practitioner.

SA 101, as has been described, provided students with information regarding the skills needed to be in student affairs so they could reflect on their own abilities and skills. There were many examples of students working through this process. For example, after hearing about the interpersonal skills needed to be successful in student affairs, Karina shared that she felt she had the skills necessary in that regard to be successful. Karina said “people would just tell me that like they can just connect with me and like tell me like things they want to tell me.” Lauren expressed similar confidence in her skills related to collaboration. “Yeah, I think I have a lot of collaboration skills just because my major is very project-based and discussion-based and having to work with people in your class.”

There were also students who articulated dissonance between the abilities needed and their own abilities. Elizabeth was perhaps the best example of this. Throughout the semester, she conveyed her concern about aspects of the student affairs profession. She felt she had not been exposed to some of the more serious situations or experiences that some students bring with them to college. Knowing that as a student affairs professional she would be working with students from a variety of backgrounds, she was nervous about her ability to navigate those situations.

> In hearing other people’s stories and talking to other students in the class, I feel like I haven’t been exposed to the students that struggle like really, really badly or with certain issues that I never have been exposed to and so sometimes that scares me because…I don’t know if I’m cut out to talk to people that are struggling with suicide or that are dealing with the mental health issues that are very serious.

This highlighted concerns Elizabeth had over entering the field of student affairs. She did not believe she has the experiences or skills to work through some of the situations student affairs professionals may find themselves working through on a daily basis.

Outside of their own abilities, students shared the extent to which their personal values aligned with the profession’s values. Such alignment promoted career interest (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Some participants saw their personal values manifested in the work of the student affairs profession. For instance, all six participants highlighted the importance for their career to involve helping others, with specific emphasis on helping others fulfill their own dreams. This was an important personal value to each participant, as well as a value they felt the student affairs profession also held. For example, Caleb enjoyed and valued working with people. “I love helping people, and I love working with people.” He believed a career in student affairs could provide him opportunities to “help students achieve their dreams in education, and careers.”

A second shared value among participants related to the desire for their work to be meaningful and fulfilling. This value manifested itself in different ways. For Carrie, it was important for her to work collaboratively with others in a team environment. “I am not someone who wants to sit in my office and do work by myself.” Lauren’s comments were similar to Carrie. She too valued a collaborative team atmosphere. Lauren also shared that she was searching for stability in her future career. Both collaboration and stability were values she identified in the student affairs profession.

A final shared value among participants was the desire for their workplace to be an inclusive environment. Carrie, for example, saw college campuses as a welcoming, inclusive environment – which was very important to her. “There’s not a lot of judgment, and a lot of acceptance. It’s just a very welcoming place to be.” Lauren shared her desire to help create a welcoming environment for students to be themselves. Karina’s reflections mirrored Lauren’s, but highlighted her personal life experiences. Karina has a passion for advocacy and a desire to educate others on topics such as racism, colorism, and social hierarchy – work she believes she can do as a student affairs professional.

This section reviewed several key themes and messages contained within SA 101 course content. While all interconnected to each other and also related to the SCCT framework proposed by Lent et al. (1994), the themes presented highlight that students in SA 101 were frequently using the information presented in SA 101 to reflect on the alignment (or misalignment) between their personal abilities and values and the abilities needed to be successful in student affairs. This is the hallmark of SCCT and the development of the self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations needed to understand career development among these students. The final section of this chapter takes the information presented to this point and thoroughly details the connection between SA 101 content and student experience to the SCCT framework.

SCCT at Work

Having reviewed the semester chronologically, it is evident that the concepts theorized by Lent et al. (1994) manifested throughout the beginning, middle, and end of SA 101. The remainder of the chapter utilizes SCCT as a framework to dive-deeper into how SA 101 (the learning experience in Figure 1) contributed to career development, specifically self-efficacy, outcome expectations, personal goals, as well as choice actions and performance attainments.

Self-Efficacy

Many scholars have explored the concept of self-efficacy. This information was highlighted in Chapter 2. In short, self-efficacy refers to people’s judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Essentially, self-efficacy answers the question ‘can I do this?’ (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy is central to Lent et al.’s (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT) and to career interests in general. “People form enduring interests in activities in which they view themselves to be efficacious and in which they anticipate positive outcomes" (Lent et al., 1994, p. 89). To this end, this study's second research question asks about the role of SA 101 on self-efficacy development within SA 101 asking, "in what ways did this course assist students in the development of self-efficacy in relation to their interest in pursuing a career in student affairs?" From the literature, we know self-efficacy is informed by past personal performance, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and emotional arousal (Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Lent et al., 1994). SA 101 specifically provided information on the field and vicarious learning experiences to inform students about the profession, while and provided a formal avenue to reflect on one's fit with student affairs.

SA 101 helped students understand more about the field of student affairs, including what it is, what it is not, what skills are needed to be successful, what it would be like to serve in such a role, what qualifications are needed, and more. For example, Karina learned more about the daily life of a student affairs professional. "I just thought that they help students, but it's much more than that." Similarly, Caleb, like many of the participants, shared that he learned a lot about the different functional areas within student affairs from professionals in those specific areas. He shared that he learned "from different professionals in the field about why they chose that path." In this way, SA 101 provided that vicarious learning Lent et al. (1994) hypothesized, which in turn offered students greater exposure to and understanding of the field of student affairs in order to help answer the question, 'can I do this?' The course also infused vicarious learning throughout the course as guest speakers presented on their experiences in student affairs, an indirect learning mechanism that the students in the class certainly used to scrutinize their self-efficacy for a career in student affairs.

Earlier in this chapter, I reported on the experiences of the six student participants in the study. Each student underscored the advancement of their understanding of the field of student affairs, learning more about the profession itself. This level of exposure surpasses what could be provided outside of an intentional learning experience such as SA 101. The role of classmates and the instructors, as well as the guest speakers, and the course assignments each offered opportunities for students to engage in reflection, which in turn increased or decreased their efficacy toward a career in student affairs. While this was not as intentionally planned as Lattuca and Stark (2009) suggest in their academic planning literature, the instructors of SA 101 nonetheless provided a scaffolded approach to understanding the field of student affairs. The first few weeks of the course, for example, started with an overview of the field and functional areas, then turned attention toward the history and purpose of higher education. From there, the learning agenda took off, with course sessions dedicated to personal and professional values, professional competencies, and a deeper dive into various functional areas. This helped expand students' understanding of the field and exposed them to a functional areas outside of their limited scope prior to SA 101.

Guest speakers, classmates, instructors, and course assignments all contributed to the development of self-efficacy among students enrolled in SA 101. The role of classmates, instructors, and guest speakers provided a means of vicarious learning for students in the class. Caleb found this to be true and felt he learned from his peers in the class as well as the speakers and instructors. In Caleb's final interview, he noted the influence the instructors had on his learning, but also specifically on his self-efficacy and confidence in pursuing student affairs. "Seeing both of them [the instructors] started in housing at Century, and then that's where I got my start. And then seeing where they're at now was definitely cool." Caleb was able to see himself and his experience in his instructors, who he felt have been successful student affairs professionals. Roadie too shared similar sentiments, commenting on the positive influence the guest presenters had on her understanding of and self-efficacy for pursuing student affairs. In her final reflection assignment, Roadie wrote:

> Another thing that I think helped me make a decision, was that panelists highlighted the best and the hardest parts of their jobs. I think seeing the good and the bad in a profession is really important before committing to it.

Beyond classmates, instructors, and guest presenters, the course assignments also provided students the forum to explore and reflect on their self-efficacy toward a career in student affairs. The formal assignments served as dedicated vehicles for self-reflection and proved to be a rich data source for information on efficacy development of students over time. The role of course assignments is highlighted in the next section.

Through these experiences, SA 101 participants experienced changes in self-efficacy over the course of the semester. As Lent et al. (1994) postulated, "self-efficacy is not a passive, static trait, but rather is seen as a dynamic set of self-beliefs" (p. 83). We see this at-play in the findings of the present study. For example, Elizabeth began the semester feeling positively about student affairs as a career option and felt she would more than likely enter the profession. However, by the end of the semester, she articulated that she was not pursuing student affairs. What changed? For Elizabeth, as her understanding of student affairs grew, her efficacy for such a career decreased. Elizabeth became increasingly concerned about student affairs. At first, Elizabeth was excited for the prospect of student affairs and felt her skills and abilities aligned well with the field. By the middle of the semester, after learning more about the profession, Elizabeth felt she had enough information to make a decision, but her indecisiveness and uncertainty prevented her from making such a commitment. In hindsight, this was not indecision, but rather low self-efficacy for student affairs work. At the end of the semester, Elizabeth no longer felt her abilities aligned with those needed to enter student affairs – a decrease in self-efficacy as she learned more about what it would take to be a successful student affairs professional.

These findings suggest SA 101 as a learning experience to have influenced self-efficacy among students. As will be explored in the following sections, this influence has a ripple effect, whereby self-efficacy, in turn, influences career interest, goals, actions, and ultimately performance as well. The influence on self-efficacy cannot be understated. SA 101 provided important opportunities for students to develop efficacy (or not) for the student affairs profession.

Outcome Expectations and Personal Goals

This study's third research question focused on outcome expectations, asking the degree to which students in SA 101 described positive outcome expectations and personal goals aligning with a career in students affairs. This section describes how the findings of this study provide an answer to this research question.

Outcome Expectations

Following the sequence of the SCCT model of career choice, attention is now turned toward outcome expectations. According to the model, outcome expectations are influenced by learning experiences, as well as self-efficacy. In turn, outcome expectations include the rest of the model, including career interests, goals, actions, and subsequent performance. Outcome expectations seek to answer the question “if I do this, what will happen?” (Lent et al., 1994). These outcome expectations are often informed by past experiences and second-hand information. In addition, Lent et al. postulated that there is a positive relationship between career interests and positive outcome expectations, meaning one is more likely to express interest in a given career field if they believe they can perform tasks associated with that profession (Cunningham et al., 2005; Kaminsky & Behrend, 2015).

The results of this study presented SA 101’s role in educating and exposing undergraduate students to the field of student affairs. Two main themes described in an earlier section were centered around what it takes to be successful as a student affairs professional and how these skills align with the skillset of the students in SA 101. As new information was introduced in the class, whether from the instructor, a class reading, a classroom discussion, or guest presenter, students consciously and subconsciously attempted to align their personal abilities with the skills needed to be successful in student affairs. In this way, personal abilities informed outcome expectations, illustrating

Bandura’s (1986) belief that “people act on their judgements of what they can do, as well as on their beliefs about the likely effects of various actions” (p. 231).

Overlaying these themes with the SCCT framework illustrated the role SA 101 had on helping students develop realistic, yet personal outcome expectations for a career in student affairs. In fact, such outcome expectations spanned the three domains Bandura (1986) referenced, including physical, social, and self-evaluative. Each student participant described different outcome expectations, yet all provided context for the ways in which SA 101 helped them understand the types of results their abilities would produce for them in a student affairs position. This included both strengths and areas for growth. For instance, Lauren felt her skillset and abilities matched those needed to be successful in student affairs. SA 101 emphasized the importance of interpersonal skills, as well as skills in communication, teamwork, and organization. She felt she possessed these skills as a result of her coursework in communication studies, but also from her experiences working on a team in her sorority.

In my analysis, I produced profiles for each student participant. A section of each student participant’s profile focused on their personal abilities and the alignment of those abilities with the skills needed to be a successful student affairs professional. When coding these profiles during data analysis, these narratives provided justification for the assertion that SA 101 influenced students’ outcome expectations for a career in student affairs. In fact, each of the three domains Bandura (1986) described were represented. First, the physical domain of outcome expectations – such as money. Several students shared their newfound understanding of the realities of compensation within student affairs. Some, like Elizabeth, realized the compensation would not support her desired lifestyle. Others, however, pursued their interest in student affairs despite the low-pay potential within the field. For example, Caleb shared that he was well aware that student affairs professionals do not make a lot of money. However, he conveyed during one interview that is not his priority. “To me, being happy and having a good career is a lot better than making millions of dollars.” This statement underscores his newfound alignment of outcome expectations.

A second domain Bandura (1986) offered as influential to outcome expectations was social – that is, social approval for the career trajectory. Social approval answers the question “if I do this, what will happen?” with specific interest in the reaction and subsequent reaction from those close to the student. Carrie experienced some of this after she decided to apply for student affairs graduate programs. She described her parents asking many questions about her decision to apply, what exactly the field was, and how she planned to pay for the additional schooling. Elizabeth articulated similar social outcome expectations. For her, there were individuals in her life who felt her talents would be wasted in a career in student affairs, proposing that she should pursue careers with more social prominence. Elizabeth found that these influences served as a barrier to her entry into student affairs and also contributed to her indecision with respect to selecting a career path.

The final domain related to outcome expectations postulated by Bandura (1986) is self-evaluative, or self-satisfaction, with the potential outcomes of engaging with a particular vocational path. This domain really gets to the heart of the matter. Does an individual feel they could do and be satisfied with such a career? Arguably, this was a key component to the design and realization of SA 101. The course provided students with information regarding the skills needed to be in student affairs so they could reflect on their own abilities. There were many examples of students working through this process. For example, Roadie felt student affairs professionals need to be compassionate, confident, and flexible. While she said that she continues to grow in her confidence levels, she believed she possessed these three skills. Understanding the skills needed and assessing one's own abilities in that area assisted Roadie, and others, in the career development and decision-making process. Lauren expressed similar sentiments in her skills related to collaboration. "Yeah, I think I have a lot of collaboration skills just because my major is very project-based and discussion-based and having to work with people in your class." Because of their comfort and skill with these elements of the profession, the students reported positive outcome expectations and an increased interest in pursuing student affairs. As Lent et al. (1994) proposed in their SCCT manuscript, there was a direct, positive relationship between outcome expectations and career interests.

The opposite was true as well. If the skills needed did not match the student's perceptions of their own skillset, it was more likely that they expressed doubts regarding the profession as a whole. Their self-evaluative or self-satisfaction was markedly different from those who expressed compatibility between their personal abilities and the skills needed in student affairs. This chapter detailed Elizabeth's experience in SA 101 and how the course reduced her self-efficacy and outcome expectations for a career in student affairs. As she continued to learn more about the field throughout the semester, the less interested she became in the profession. This can be attributed to her decreased efficacy for the field and an overall decrease in positive outcome expectations. By the mid-semester interview, Elizabeth's interest in the field began to waiver. She shared that she took off her "rose-colored glasses" and started to examine whether student affairs was the right profession for her. In the end, she simply could not see herself in such a profession. While not helpful to the overall recruitment efforts within the student affairs field, this was a positive outcome for both Elizabeth personally, as well as the profession. For Elizabeth, she was exposed to the realities of the profession before committing to it. SA 101 provided her greater insight into the field so she could make an informed decision. Similarly, SA 101 assists the field as a whole in helping to ensure those who actually do enter the field are knowledgeable about the realities of the field. This exposure could very well influence long-term persistence and retention in the field.

Personal Goals and Values

The experiences of the student participants within this study provide insight into their self-efficacy and outcome expectation development with respect to a career in student affairs. This study's findings suggest SA 101 influenced students' self-efficacy and outcome expectations with respect to a career in student affairs. For some, such as Lauren and Caleb, this resulted in more positive feelings and greater interest in a career in student affairs. For others, like Elizabeth and Karina, SA 101 brought to light uncertainty and doubt with respect to such a career. This influenced their self-efficacy and outcome expectations negatively with regard to a career in student affairs, but positively overall so they could take what they learned and continue their career exploration with another field that aligned closer to what they feel they can do and where they would see positive outcomes.

For those students who identified positive advancements in self-efficacy and outcome expectations with respect to a career in student affairs, they experienced greater interest in the field itself. Lent et al. (1994) suggest that self-efficacy and outcome expectations feed career interest. Interest, in turn, influences choice goals. Career choice goals are also included in the model of career choice presented by Lent et al. Personal goals provide organization and guidance to individuals as they seek to solidify career arrangements. In addition, goals provide behavioral motivation to seek out and achieve desired outcomes in the future. Personal goals are involved in this model because they can help sustain career choice over a longer period of time, while also giving rise to an individual's intentions, plans, and aspirations to engage with a particular profession. The interplay of self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations, according to Lent et al., can cultivate personal career goals bidirectionally. Lent et al. theorized that individuals seek out occupations consistent with their values and personal goals, so long as they are committed to such goals and that these goals are clear and specific.

The findings presented in this chapter outline the experiences of students within SA 101. Specifically, the chapter highlighted the connections students uncovered between their personal goals and values and how those aligned with a career in student affairs. SA 101 pressed students to consider how their personal goals and values were represented in the field of student affairs. Students reflected on whether a career in student affairs could help them accomplish their career goals, such as helping others and having a meaningful career. All six participants highlighted the importance for their career to involve helping others, with specific emphasis on helping others fulfill their own dreams. Some of the students saw student affairs as fulfilling their goal to have a meaningful career, something challenging, engaging, and collaborative. Highlighting the presence of choice goals within the experiences of participants in this study was important as I continued to investigate the findings of this study with respect to SCCT and Lent et al.'s (1994) model of career choice. The subsequent sections reviewed the next elements of the model, including choice actions and attainments, while also examining the personal, background, and contextual factors at play.

Choice Actions and Performance Attainments

According to the model proposed by Lent et al. (1994), career choice goals inform career choice actions. These choice actions are the actual steps taken to implement a career choice selection. The decision to enroll in SA 101, for example, could be considered a choice action. As was explored earlier, each student participant enrolled in the course for a different reason. The majority of students were interested in student affairs and wanted to learn more. In a way, they took action to explore their interest and used SA 101 as a performance attainment to increase or decrease their self-efficacy and outcome expectations around the student affairs profession. Other choice actions were represented in the study. Carrie's decision to apply for admission to a student affairs master's program was also a choice action. Similarly, many students described actions they had taken or planned to take to gain additional students affairs experiences. Caleb discussed the connections he made in order to pursue an internship within athletics, while Lauren discussed applying to serve as an admissions ambassador.

The results of these actions are known as performance attainments within Lent et al.'s (1994) model. Such performance attainments describe the outcomes of the actions taken. These could be successes, setbacks, or failures. An example might be acceptance into a graduate school program or, on the other side, failure of a course required for graduation in an individual's major field of study. Carrie's acceptance into graduate school was one such performance attainment. She saw her acceptance into graduate school as a rite-of-passage and a confidence boost to her career decision-making process. In this way, performance attainments support or weaken self-efficacy and outcome expectations, and by extension, ultimately influence career choice persistence (Lent et al., 1994, p. 95). Overtime, these actual experiences influence one's self-efficacy and outcome expectations and have a direct influence on career development.

Choice actions and performance attainments ultimately help to answer this study's final research question, which sought to identify why students in SA 101 pursued (or did not pursue) a master's degree in student affairs and/or a career in student affairs following the completion of SA 101. The short answer to this research question is that the reason to pursue or not pursue student affairs lies in each student's journey through Lent et al.'s (1994) model of career choice, specifically in the growth in self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations for a career in student affairs. This chapter demonstrated how SA 101 influenced the experiences of the students in the class and how those experiences connected with SCCT, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations.

Personal, Background, and Contextual Factors

As a learning experience, SA 101 influenced career development, specifically by providing experiences aimed at helping student advance their own self-efficacy and outcome expectations. This chapter outlined the variables at play by utilizing the social cognitive career theory offered by Lent et al. (1994). The main tenets of the theory are three key sociocognitive mechanisms: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Lent et al. recognized the importance, however, of personal and contextual variables on these sociocognitive variables. As such, the model of career choice indicates self-efficacy and outcome expectations derive from personal inputs, background contextual affordances, and learning experiences. The interplay of these variables with the present study were explored throughout this chapter; however, it is worthwhile to describe these once more in the context of the existing literature and theoretical framework as well.

Lent et al. (1994) included gender, race, and heritable attributes in their SCCT model for career choice. These elements, despite being socially constructed, have "profound psychological and social significance" and shape career development by virtue of exposure, opportunities, and experiences (p. 104). Discussions around gender's influence on career interest was unstated; however, race was brought up on a number of occasions. Among the sample of students, two of the six students disclosed their racial/ethnic identity as non-White. Karina, as a Hispanic woman, and Elizabeth, as an Asian American woman, experienced SA 101 differently than their White peers. Both reported difficulty with their college experience as a Student of Color, particularly with regard to navigating the collegiate system and comfort speaking up in a majority of their classes. While both shared positive feelings about SA 101 and the instructors, it is curious that the only two students from under-represented backgrounds were on the less-interested side of pursuing a career in student affairs. The findings do not suggest a reason for this phenomenon. In fact, if anything, the course itself provided a higher level of diversity in classroom content than the institution at large. Course materials and guest speakers represented a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including a number of Professionals of Color, perhaps even suggesting there were a greater number of Professionals of Color in the field than is truly accurate. Though possible, neither Karina nor Elizabeth articulated concern around their race/ethnicity proving to hinder or otherwise negatively influence their ability to enter the field of student affairs.

Background contextual affordances were also included in the SCCT model. Similar to person inputs, background contextual affordances have a direct influence on learning experiences. Lent et al. (1994) described such affordances as personal expectations and performance standards that can enhance or impede career development. This may include perceptions of supports, opportunities, and barriers to career choice. For instance, each student was asked to identify barriers in their lives that may prevent them from pursuing a career in student affairs. This context is helpful in understanding their career development using a SCCT lens. Background and contextual values are worth highlighting again here because of the role such factors play in the SCCT framework. These contextual factors “help shape the learning experiences that fuel personal interests and choices” (Lent et al., 1994, p. 107). What a student brings with them to class influenced their experience and the experience of their classmates. Several of the students noted the influence of their peers on their learning. Carrie specifically shared that she valued the context and perspective her classmates offered on certain functional areas which they had direct experience with; however, such additions to class were contextual and framed from that one person's singular experience.

Background variables can be distal or proximal (Lent et al., 1994). Distal influences that precede career interest and choice, according to Lent et al., could include exposure to career-relevant opportunities or mentors, financial support to engage in exploration, and/or socialization based on gender, race, or ability. Distal influences for students in this course could include the way in which they found out about SA 101 in the first place or their pre-SA 101 related student affairs experience (i.e. student organization involvement, on-campus employment, etc.). Carrie, Caleb, Lauren, Roadie, and Elizabeth worked on-campus jobs. From career services to admissions, these student employment positions exposed the participants of this study to various student affairs units. Several students were involved in student organizations or with fraternity and sorority life. Proximal influences, on the other hand, tend to focus on exposure to career-relevant opportunities or mentors, network of role models, and perceived supports and barriers (Lent et al., 1994). Each student described barriers that could prevent them from entering the field (i.e. financial barriers, difficulty finding a job in chosen functional area, possible burnout, etc.). These barriers would be considered proximal influences. Beyond barriers, the presence of career-relevant experiences were noted throughout the study. For example, Caleb's position as a resident assistant afforded him the opportunity to form a relationship with his supervisor, who in turn recognized his interest in student affairs and recommended SA 101 to him. Other students conveyed the important role models or mentors in their lives, as well as the importance of growing their network. Through SA 101, students had the opportunity to hear from and speak to a wide range of professionals on campus. Several of the participants noted reaching out to these individuals after meeting them in order to learn more about the profession or gain additional opportunities.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the results of the case study analysis of SA 101, specifically as they relate to this study's research questions. The chapter began with an exploration of the institutional and case context grounding this study. With this understanding, results were shared chronologically as career development took place throughout the course of the semester in SA 101. Specific attention was given to highlight the changes in self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and choice goals for participants throughout the semester. The chapter concluded with an analysis of the results using the SCCT framework as a way to understand the data and findings in order to suggest how SA 101 contributed to career development among aspiring student affairs professionals.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

In this final chapter, I discuss the results of this study within the context of existing literature. Specifically, I compare and contrast the results of this study with previous related literature to highlight the unique contributions of this study. In addition, I investigate the SCCT theoretical framework and provide commentary on this study's contributions to theory in this area. Additionally, this chapter reviews this study's implications for practice and recommendations for future research. The chapter wraps up with a review of the strengths and limitations of the study before providing an overall conclusion.

Discussion

Through this study, I aimed to understand the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals, with a particular focus on the influence of an undergraduate student affairs course. With very few studies directly relating to this topic, I explored related, tangential literature to ground and justify this study. This literature provided a foundation to understand relevant concepts and served as a basis for data analysis. With the findings in hand, I turn my attention now to discuss these findings in light of the existing literature in order to showcase how the present study confirms, advances, or contradicts existing literature. I divided this discussion into three parts, to include a discussion on how this study helps to understand interest in the field of student affairs, attrition among student affairs professionals, as well as undergraduate career development courses.

Interest in the Student Affairs Profession

Chapter 2 provided an overview of pertinent literature related to how individuals come across the field of student affairs and develop interest in pursuing it long-term. First and foremost, scholars have described student affairs as a hidden profession (Linder & Winston Simmons, 2015; Richmond & Sherman, 1991). Many individuals simply do not realize such a profession exists until they enter college as students. The findings of this study reinforce the notion that student affairs is a hidden profession. For the participants in this study, exposure to the field came by way of an introduction to student affairs by a peer or an advisor on campus. Many of the students described not having known about the field before someone calling attention to student affairs. For example, Caleb, Carrie, and Roadie mentioned the importance of advisors in their career interest and trajectory into student affairs. Their experience supports existing research and literature suggesting student affairs is a hidden field, often introduced by shoulder-tapping (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006). As Karina shared, “honestly, I didn’t know that it [student affairs] was a career.” Caleb and Elizabeth echoed similar comments. Caleb shared, “this is a whole field that not everybody realizes is a thing, because nobody grows up saying, ‘Oh, I want to be an athletic advisor for student athletes.’ Nobody knows that’s an actual thing until you get to college.”

The results of this study differ from prior literature on the timing of such exposure to the field of student affairs. Hunter (1992) and Taub and McEwen (2006) reported that it was typically not until a student’s junior or senior year of college that they expressed interest in exploring student affairs as a profession. This study, on the other hand, highlights the experiences of several second-year students enrolled in SA 101 and exploring their interest in the field of student affairs. This is perhaps one of the benefits of offering a course such as SA 101. Its presence provided exposure in and of itself.

The existing literature also discussed the presence of critical incidents on those interested in pursuing a career in student affairs. Critical incidents refer to important experiential learning opportunities that give rise to career interests. Many scholars describe the important role of such incidents (Hunter, 1992; Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Silver & Jakeman, 2014; Taub & McEwen, 2006). These incidents include formative experiences that shape career exploration and interest, including student employment, outside-of-the-classroom involvement on campus, positional leadership in clubs or organizations, and others. Such critical incidents were present among the sample of student participants of this study as well. All participants had some experience or prior exposure to the field of student affairs. This exposure came by way of campus involvement or on-campus student employment. Carrie, for example, worked on campus in the wellness center in addition to being involved in her sorority and was a library ambassador. Caleb, Lauren, Roadie, and Elizabeth also worked on-campus jobs and several were involved in fraternity and sorority life. Karina, on the other hand, spent most of her time involved with student organizations on campus, specifically tied to the staff of the multicultural center. The overarching commonality is how these experiences and exposure provided initial interest in SA 101 and, by extension, also interest in the field of student affairs. In addition to these experiences, I would also consider SA 101 as a critical incident for students enrolled in SA 101 because it provided a window into the world of the profession, as well as opportunities to learn, explore, and network.

A final area worth noting from the existing literature is the convergence of personal values with career interests. Hunter (1992), Taub and McEwen (2006), and Tull et al. (2009) discussed that alignment of personal values with student affairs professional values was a consideration for those who expressed interest in pursuing the student affairs profession. In this study, all six participants highlighted the importance for their career to align with their personal values. One such value involved helping others, with specific emphasis on helping others fulfill their own dreams. This was an important personal value to each participant, as well as a value they were searching for in a future career. A second shared value among participants was the desire for their workplace to be an inclusive environment. For instance, Lauren and Karina both shared their desire to help create a welcoming environment for students to be themselves. In particular, Karina shared her passion for advocacy and a desire to educate others on diversity and inclusion topics. Similarly, participants articulated a desire for their work to be meaningful and fulfilling. This value manifested itself in different ways. For Carrie, it was important for her to work collaboratively with others in a team environment. She placed value on the camaraderie among coworkers and engaging with colleagues to solve problems. Roadie's comments were similar to Carrie. For Roadie, fulfilling work meant flexibility in pursuing multiple interest areas. SA 101 helped Roadie understand the variety of areas within student affairs, alleviating her fear of having "a monotonous job." In this way, SA 101 helped Roadie feel more confident in her career decision. She knows now that she could begin in one area and move around to different units as she finds a role she is excited about. These experiences provided Carrie and Roadie instances of congruence of personal values with those of the student affairs profession.

Attrition within Student Affairs

The opposite end of career interest is career departure. The original inspiration for this study was to investigate the alarming rate of attrition among student affairs professionals. My assumption was that an early intervention tool, such as SA 101, could assist with the problem of attrition in the field. This assumption was based on the idea that if those interested in student affairs have a greater understanding of the field before entry, they have a greater understanding of the realities and complexities of the field and either enter the field eyes-wide-open or choose not to enter the field at all. Unfortunately, this study does not address attrition directly. Instead, this study does what Silver and Jakeman (2014) called for when they stated there was a need to "advocate for measures to ensure students enrolling in graduate preparation programs are aware of the nature of student affairs work" (p. 179). Affirming Silver and Jakeman's call to action, Perez (2016b) stated that "early professional socialization experiences play a powerful role in shaping one's expectations of and commitment to the field" (p. 764).

SA 101 is one example of a career-related intervention that colleges and universities can implement to assist students in making informed career choices, particularly those interested in the student affairs profession. The findings of this study support the notion that early exposure assists students in their career development and discernment process. Many students in the study noted their exposure to areas they had not previously been aware of. Carrie, for example, specifically noted that she was unfamiliar with the role of the dean of students office. Lauren highlighted exposure to the disability services office. This exposure extended beyond the functional areas themselves to also provide a check on expectations vs. reality for the students in SA 101. The course provided real life examples of what it takes to land a job in student affairs and what it is really like to work in the field of student affairs. The instructors were open and honest with their students about the ups and downs of the profession, including some of the less glamorous aspects of the field. Additionally, SA 101 provided a forum for students to explore graduate schools. Oak shared that he felt SA 101 was successful in "giving them [the students] a sneak peek of what graduate school might look like." As Lauren shared, "[SA 101] made the idea [of graduate school] seem way less scary. When I start to seriously look at schools, I will have a good starting point from these assignments." In these ways, SA 101 provided early exposure to the field of student affairs. Time will tell if the course has any bearing on one's persistence in the profession.

Undergraduate Career Development Courses

SA 101 is not one-of-a-kind and is not unique to Century University. As has been described, there are several institutions across the country where undergraduate coursework in student affairs is being offered. More broadly, SA 101 is but one example of many career development courses available to undergraduate students. While some career courses are geared toward first and second year students as a means to assist students in their academic major selection, other career courses, like SA 101, are designed for specific disciplines. This study's findings support the previous literature on this topic. Heppner and Krause (1979) indicated that such career development courses increased student career development competencies and career decision-making ability. Brooks (1995) found that participants in career course began career planning earlier, had greater self-awareness, demonstrated a better idea of the realities of the job market, and had resumes ready before graduation. The findings of this study affirm Brooks and Heppner and Krause's previous work. Students in SA 101 had a more informed sense of the realities of the student affairs profession and demonstrated self-awareness when it came to honestly assessing their own skills and abilities.

The results of this study affirm existing literature on the types of activities that have proven successful in career courses. Such elements include lectures and discussions, small group activities, written reflections of personal and career-related goals, information about graduate school, an informational interview, and the occasional guest speaker (Brown & Krane, 2000; Freeman et al., 2017; Thomas & McDaniel, 2004). As the instructors of SA 101, Ann and Oak utilized all of these elements within SA 101. For example, course assignments included an informational interview with a current student affairs practitioner, a small group assignment where students presented on a student affairs functional unit together, and a series of assignments to help students explore and prepare for graduate school. Additionally, SA 101 relied heavily on group discussion and the students appreciated this seminar-style classroom environment. Caleb, for instance, described that the class had a "ton of discussion" – and highlighted that the teaching style was markedly different than his other classes. Carrie also noted the variety of teaching formats. "Some days are lectures and some days are activities." When the instructors planned activities, such as case study or a hot topic/current event discussion, Carrie identified those experiences as the most meaningful. The practical application of such activities provided student the opportunity to practice critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, while also providing insight into life as a student affairs professional. as a learning opportunity for the class. The mixture of guest presenters also assisted in the learning process. For Elizabeth, the inclusion and frequency of outside presenters in SA 101 set it apart from her other classes at Century University. Roadie echoed these comments, sharing that she appreciated how the class did not revolve around the instructors, but that they defer to panelists and experts around campus, while providing space to bounce ideas, questions, and thoughts around the class freely. These elements helped form a rich learning environment for students to see themselves in certain careers and explore how their unique skills, knowledge, and identity could contribute to that field.

The findings of this study also advance the literature on the topic of undergraduate career courses. First, this study uses a discipline-specific career development course as the basis for this qualitative study. No such student affairs course has been studied in such a way and it has been several years since the literature from Dotson et al. (1996) explored a similar course but for students in psychology. Additionally, this research further advances understanding of undergraduate career development courses by uncovering the important role classmates and peers play within the career development classroom setting. Other studies on career courses do not highlight the influence of fellow classmates and peers on the learning experience within the course. In the context of SA 101, many students commented that class discussions were impactful as part of their learning experience. The impact, however, was not simply because they were speaking up in class, but because the discussions highlighted the different perspectives and experiences of each student in the classroom. For instance, Elizabeth articulated how the discussions with her classmates informed her perspectives and increased her understanding of the diverse experiences of others. Elizabeth was not accustomed to being around individuals with such differing opinions than herself or people willing to speak their mind. Through SA 101, she identified that such dialogue is valued in student affairs, which in turn assisted in Elizabeth's own career development process.

Elizabeth was not alone in her feeling that SA 101 provided her a window into the diverse experiences of others. Roadie and Caleb also communicated similar takeaways. With respect to the influence her peers and her instructors have had on her learning experience, Roadie spoke about the impact of the hot topic/case study discussions during class. Roadie, for instance, specifically recounted a conversation with a peer in SA 101 "who has very different opinions than me and is very vocal about those opinions." The two of them would go back and forth during class. Roadie shared, "he brings up some points that I don't think about and then I bring up some that he doesn't." Caleb also conveyed being challenged to expand his own worldview as a result of SA 101 discussions. "Discussions challenged a lot of my thoughts…just having a lot of those conversations opened me up to new things that I haven't seen, new perspectives…to new cultures, too." The role of peers in the learning process cannot be understated and certainly assisted in the educational process, as well as the career development of each student in the classroom.

Contributions and Implications for Theory

This study's primary research question asked how SA 101 contributed to the career development of students interested in a career in student affairs. Based on the findings presented in Chapter 4, it is evident this course provided exposure to the field of student affairs, as well as time devoted to personal reflection used for career discernment. Pairing these findings with the existing literature and viewing the findings through the SCCT theoretical framework, SA 101 contributed to the career development of students enrolled in the course. In Chapter 4, I discussed how SA 101 contributed to career development using SCCT as a framework to understand this development, specifically focusing on the self-efficacy, outcome expectations, personal goals, as well as choice actions and performance attainments. This section considers the findings of this study and reengages the theoretical framework in a discussion aimed at highlighting the contributions and implications this research has for career development theory.

The theoretical framework used in this study was Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory. Lent et al. began their model explanation with two variables: self-efficacy and outcome expectations. These two areas "jointly give rise to [career] interests" and indirectly influence many other variables in the model (Lent et al., 1994, p. 95). These variables initially formulate a person's efficacy and expectations for certain career-related tasks. Development of self-efficacy and outcome expectations come from a variety of sources - including as a result of participating in intentional learning experiences. My study placed SA 101 as the learning experience to investigate how the course influences career development. The findings of this study suggest undergraduate coursework in student affairs influenced student career development through growth in self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations. In this way, this study affirmed the theoretical concepts included in SCCT and also demonstrated that career interests form when people "view themselves to be efficacious and in which they anticipate positive outcomes" (Lent et al., 1994, p. 89).

In addition to confirming the SCCT model and sociocognitive variables, this study advanced SCCT in two distinct ways. First, the findings highlighted and gave voice to the importance of learning experiences within the SCCT framework. The learning experiences variable in the model has often been mentioned in previous research, but has often been left unexplored. This study puts learning experiences front-and-center and advances the literature in this way. As was discussed in Chapter 2, much of the existing research utilizing SCCT focused on measuring self-efficacy or outcome expectations using a quantitative instrument at a singular point-in-time. This existing research and the model presented by Lent et al. (1994) do not focus on the learning experience, but rather about measuring one or more of the sociocognitive variables within the model. Therefore, these studies do not shed light on how the learning experience itself contributes to advancement in career development. This study, on the other hand, provided a valuable contribution to the research utilizing SCCT. Not only did this study place the learning experience at the heart of the study, data collection occurred over the course of many months. The value here is that it helps us understand career development progression over time and the collective nature of the learning experience – not just an inventory at a set point in time. Collecting data throughout the learning experience allowed for a more robust understanding of the experience itself.

Learning Experiences

Using Lent et al.'s (1994) SCCT model of career choice outlined in Figure 1, in Chapter 4, I explored each piece of the model in the context of SA 101. I considered SA 101 as a learning experience within the model. According to Lent et al., well-structured learning experiences influence career development by way of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Such a learning experience is defined as having "educational and occupationally relevant activities" (Lent et al., 1994, p. 103). SA 101 provided a structured experience for students to engage with career-related topics, discussions, and overall exposure to the student affairs profession. SA 101 influenced self-efficacy, outcome expectations, career interests, goals, and actions.

The reality is that the existing literature on learning experiences within the SCCT model is an area in need of further research. Schaub and Tokar (2005), for instance, noted the lack of research in this area, and how the few studies on learning experiences seem to generally focus on career fields and learning experiences in mathematics. Schaub and Tokar's work, among others, demonstrates the powerful nature of learning experiences in the SCCT model, yet does not provide much by way of concrete examples of positive career-related learning interventions. This is one area where the present study addressed a gap in the existing literature by providing findings to advance our understanding of the role of learning experiences within the SCCT framework.

In addition, my findings suggest SA 101 as a learning experience influenced self-efficacy among students. This influence had a ripple effect, whereby self-efficacy then influenced career interest, goals, actions, and ultimately performance as well. For example, Lauren's experience in SA 101 influenced her career development process, provided clarity, and increased her confidence in her own career decision making. "I think it [SA 101] made me a lot more confident going forward with the next steps." In her final assignment, Lauren said "From our class activities and guest speakers, I am able to say that I can see myself entering the student affairs field." The teaching strategies utilized in SA 101 served as important learning mechanisms for Lauren, and assisted in her career development, specifically her self-efficacy towards a career in student affairs. Carrie was also in a similar situation. While SA 101 was not Carrie's entry into or first exposure to student affairs, the course was reaffirming for Carrie and provided her more details and context regarding specific functional areas. At the end of the semester, when asked what she learned, Carrie shared her two main take-aways were an overall introduction to student development theory and a greater understanding of the various functional areas within the field. SA 101 reaffirmed Carrie's decision to apply for grad school and pursue student affairs. She wrote in her final reflection assignment that "this course solidified my decision to become a [student affairs] professional…opened my eyes to the variety of careers I could pursue…[and] fed the flame of my passion for student affairs." Similar to others, early on in the course, Carrie entered SA 101 with a singular area of interest based on her past experiences. For Carrie, it was academic advising. For others, it was athletics, career services, or admissions. SA 101 exposed these students to other student affairs functional areas and diversified their understanding of the profession.

Considering SA 101 as a learning experience, the course's influence on self-efficacy cannot be understated. SA 101 provided important opportunities for students to develop efficacy (or not) for the student affairs profession. These findings connect to prior literature on self-efficacy. For example, this study affirmed two of Lent et al.'s (1994) original hypotheses, finding that there was a positive relationship between learning experiences and self-efficacy. In addition, the previous research from Conklin et al. (2013) supports the findings of the present study as well. In Conklin et al.'s research, students developed greater self-efficacy when they were enthusiastic, could see themselves succeeding, and when they got a true sense for the requirements of such career fields. SA 101 provided such experiences, which informed a student's efficacy for the profession. Certainly this study affirmed the importance of learning experiences within the SCCT model and supported the existing literature. However, the results of this study highlight important advancements in our understanding of specific features for learning experiences within the SCCT model, particularly as a learning experience conducted over a set period of time. The data collection period for this study is also an advancement in the theory, which will be described in the next section.

Collection Timeframe

Chapter 2 reported on the relevant literature related to this study. I spent a great deal of time investigating SCCT, as well as understanding how prior studies utilized SCCT and advanced the theory. There are numerous examples of SCCT being used in research on career development. The majority of SCCT-related studies are quantitative in nature, while some are mixed-methods. Some studies focus on students in high school (Robinson Bounds, 2013), while other devote attention to SCCT with college students (Cunningham et al., 2005; Raque-Bogdan & Lucas, 2016). Others focus simply on testing the models proposed (Lent et al., 1994; Mills, 2009) and still others focus on specific elements of the theory (Conklin et al., 2013; Cunningham et al., 2005). As was previously described, this study advanced the learning experience elements of the theory. In addition, the present study advanced the existing literature on SCCT by providing diversity in methodology in two significant ways. First, my study explored SCCT using qualitative case study methodology. A qualitative study finds strength in the rich voice, thorough descriptions, and context provided to illuminate the topic – elements a quantitative study cannot replicate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This differentiation was necessary to learn more about SA 101 as a learning experience for students enrolled in the course.

In addition, much of the existing research used SCCT to examine self-efficacy and outcome expectations at singular points in time, typically through quantitative means. This study's methodology utilized a series of interviews during the course of a semester to gather data over time. Structuring the data collection in this way allowed for the opportunity to learn more about individual instances of career development and witness the progression (or regression) of self-efficacy and outcome expectations over a set period of time that coincided with the learning experience itself. Such data collection techniques provided a window into the influence SA 101, as well as the ability to see multiple data points as opposed to one, static point-in-time collection period as many previous studies utilized.

Contributions and Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to examine the role an undergraduate introductory student affairs course played in the career development of students interested in student affairs as a possible career. Specifically, I sought to understand the role of SA 101 in the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. The findings presented in Chapter 4, as well as the discussion offered throughout this chapter, emphasize that SA 101 served as an important introduction and learning experience for students interested in the student affairs profession. The implications of these findings will be helpful to student affairs employers, administrators, and graduate program faculty as they recruit and socialize the next generation of student affairs professionals.

SA 101's Influence on Career Development

The findings of this study suggest SA 101 played a key role in the career development of students enrolled in the course. Previous literature on discipline-specific career courses suggest such coursework assisted in students' commitment to making a career decision by presenting information and experiences "in a systematic and meaningful way, rather than in the uneven and piecemeal fashion that is typical in the absence of such an approach" (Dodson et al., 1996, p. 239). Based on the data collected and analyzed as part of this study, SA 101 offered students experiences designed to teach aspiring student affairs professionals what it takes to be a successful practitioner, what a day in the life looks like, and overall, to provide opportunities for self-reflection and discovery.

The presence of SA 101 on the campus of Century University raised the profile of the student affairs profession. The course also revealed the profession to students who may otherwise not have heard about it. Previous literature on this subject has often described the field of student affairs as a hidden profession because many individuals simply do not realize such a profession exists until they enter college (Hunter, 1992; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Based on the findings of this study and the experiences of the students enrolled in the course, SA 101 is one possible strategy to uncover the often-times hidden field of student affairs; however, this will require investment from student affairs practitioners and administrators to create the curriculum in such a way that it will garner support and buy-in from a logical discipline/department on campus willing to sponsor the course. This is a bit easier on campuses like Century, which also has a student affairs master's program.

Designing a curricular-based, scaffolded learning experience is not outside of the realm of student affairs expertise. Student affairs professionals create such educational experiences each day for students, and yet, the idea of teaching in a formalized classroom setting is sometimes off-putting and intimidating to student affairs practitioners. Oak shared similar worries as a first-time instructor during this offering of SA 101. The truth is that the education and socialization process within student affairs does not always end with student affairs professionals seeing themselves as educators. All of that aside, designing such an intentional learning experience takes a significant amount of time and effort, all of which would likely be outside of the normal scope of any one student affairs role. In true fashion, developing such a course would likely be outside of the regular job requirements of a student affairs practitioner or administrator.

Despite the weight of such a task, this study provided a roadmap for designing such an educational effort to promote the field of student affairs to undergraduate students. Where this study sets itself apart is in the use of a career development lens, which provides practitioners theoretical underpinnings for such an initiative. Specifically, this study was grounded using social cognitive career theory (SCCT) to understand the ways in which SA 101 contributed to a student's career development. The results indicate that the addition of SA 101 played a role in informing incoming professionals and allowed for career exploration and informed decision making. After all, the more familiar a student is with the field, the greater their success and persistence in the profession (Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Specifically, the influential elements of this course included the discussion-based format of the course, an array of functional areas represented and dissected in the class, specific reflection-based assignments aimed to help students see how their skillset and passions aligned (or did not align) with a career in student affairs, as well as time to meet and network with current professionals in the field. These elements provide a foundation on which to build a formalized curriculum for an introductory course to student affairs for undergraduate students. For those already teaching such a course, these items serve as useful considerations for future iterations of your course.

Career Development in the Absence of SA 101

Unfortunately, not all institutions have the ability to offer a course like SA 101. Even for institutions willing and able, there may not always be enough student interest to justify the expense in offering the course. This was true at Century University some semesters when they did not meet enrollment numbers so the course did not run. If we accept the value of formalized, academic, for-credit experiences like SA 101 as important and valuable to career development for aspiring student affairs professionals, we must identify alternate strategies to deliver the messages, experiences, and themes from SA 101.

National student affairs associations could serve as a possible solution. For example, NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education offers the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP). NUFP assists students from underrepresented communities in their discernment of a career in student affairs through mentoring relationships and intentional experiences (Silver & Jakeman, 2014). The NUFP program, as well as NUFP mentors on each campus, may wish to consider the results of this study in an effort to replicate influential elements of SA 101 aimed at increased self-efficacy and outcome expectations for aspiring student affairs professionals. Such elements could include a coordinated, intentional plan for the student to gain insight and understanding on many different functional areas from a diverse range of professionals in the field. The findings of this study suggest that an intentional plan to expose students to multiple functional areas will help widen their view and understanding of the profession and what careers are available in the field. In addition, I recommend

NUFP mentors embed personal reflection activities, as well as discussions with peers also interested in student affairs into the NUFP experience. Such interactions could assist NUFP students in their career development, as these activities did for those enrolled in SA 101. Finally, I recommend empowering NUFP students to take action and seek out experiential learning experiences in student affairs to assist in developing their self-efficacy and outcome expectations for a career in the field. This could include the optional NUFP summer internship, but may extend to other opportunities as well such as on-campus employment, student organization leadership, informational interviews, job shadowing, and so forth.

However, NUFP is a selective program and not offered to the masses. National associations should consider ways to offer more information, exposure, and experiences to aspiring student affairs professionals. One recent initiative has been the offering of a free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Co-hosted by NASPA and Colorado State University, the Exploring the Student Affairs in Higher Education Profession MOOC provided a framework for aspiring student affairs professionals to learn more about the field, what it would be like to work in student affairs, and more. This type of learning experience may offer similar experiences as SA 101; however, as was evident from the brief online delivery of SA 101 due to the pandemic, the online-only delivery of a MOOC presents some challenges and may prevent some of the more personalized elements offered in SA 101.

Outside of NUFP and the Colorado State MOOC, higher education associations typically promote October as Careers in Student Affairs Month. During this period, associations provide ideas for campus leaders to offer undergraduate and graduate students interested in a career in student affairs. Perhaps student affairs leaders on both the practitioner and academic sides could work together to offer a more robust set of learning experiences throughout the month of October to help promote and provide exposure to the field for interested students. Regardless of the specific strategy employed, student affairs practitioners and graduate faculty must work together to provide opportunities for aspiring student affairs professionals to learn more about the field, particularly in the absence of a formalized career development course.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study made important advancements in the application of social cognitive career theory (SCCT), as well as advancements in understanding of the career development of aspiring student affairs professionals. There is, however, room for further research on this topic. With respect to SCCT, this study's methodology used SCCT as a framework to understand career development over the span of several months. To date, few studies have utilized SCCT in this way, particularly in a qualitative setting. In order to advance SCCT scholarship on the various learning experiences' influence on career development, further research should focus on expanding understanding of SCCT using longitudinal and qualitative methodologies. Providing such a longitudinal perspective with SCCT as a theoretical framework will provide understanding regarding the cyclical nature of the model of career choice, with particular interest on the influence of a particular learning experience. In this study, I was only able to witness the cycle of the SCCT model in narrow ways. With further time, however, it may be possible to see career development over the span of time. This research may provide further detail on advancements in self-efficacy and outcome expectations, all the way through to performance attainments in order to eventually cycle through the model as necessary until the individual commits to a career decision. This longitudinal focus could provide important understanding for SCCT and career development of aspiring student affairs professionals in ways current research does not address, especially if conducted using qualitative techniques. The current study provided important perspective on career development using qualitative methodology. Further research using such methods could help further our understanding of career development and SCCT.

Tangibly speaking, there are several ways further research could provide important context for career development among aspiring student affairs professionals. SA 101 started a conversation around this topic, only opening the door to this particular research agenda. There are a few ways further research in this area could assist in our understanding of career development among aspiring student affairs professionals. As previously described, one avenue could include conducting a more longitudinal study using SCCT to understand career development of aspiring student affairs professionals over time.

Afterall, this study did not provide a complete picture as to whether student participants ultimately pursue, land, and successfully navigate the student affairs profession. Participants provided an idea as to their career leanings at the end of the study. Many students felt they would pursue a career in student affairs. For these students, SA 101 reaffirmed their understanding and interest. Other students, such as

Elizabeth, felt less inclined to pursue the field. SA 101 provided Elizabeth insight on the field through formal class components and also through her own self-reflection. Career development, however, is not linear or static. The answer to whether someone will pursue such a profession may very well change based on their own situation, additional experiences that further their understanding of the field, or their performance attainments for a career in the field. For example, the two Students of Color who participated in this study ended up being on the less-interested side of student affairs by the end of SA 101. The findings do not indicate there is a relationship between racial identity and interest in student affairs; however, this is certainly an area worthy of future research. Lent et al. (1994) accounts for personal variables and situations within SCCT. While the authors postulated that the SCCT model was cyclical and "repeats itself continuously over the lifespan," this process was most "fluid up until late adolescence or early adulthood, when interests…tend to stabilize" (p. 89). Once stabilized, Lent et al. suggested that it would take significant experiences to compel an individual to reconsider their career interests.

With this in mind, I plan to continue this research with a follow-up interview with the same six student participants in three years as a means to understand their career development and trajectory since this study. This follow-up could provide greater clarity as to the influence of SA 101 on their more finalized career path. The reality is that all six participants in the study were at very different stages in their career development. Part of this was due to their stage in life. Carrie, as a senior, experienced the course quite differently than Karina and Lauren who were sophomores. Carrie was applying for student affairs master's programs and interviewing for graduate assistantships, while the rest of the participants still had one or two years of their undergraduate career to engage in additional experiences to further understand student affairs. A revisit with each participant may provide greater insight into the career development of once-aspiring student affairs professionals. This is an important thread to this story. At the onset of this study, I expressed critical need to address career development among aspiring student affairs professionals. This topic is important because of the hidden nature of the field of student affairs and is also critically important given the alarmingly high rates of attrition within the student affairs profession. Part of this study's aim was to help understand how SA 101 assists with career development and exposure to student affairs before a student makes a longer-term investment of time and financial resources in pursuing a profession they may otherwise leave within five years. Circling back to these students could provide further understanding on career development, as well as persistence within student affairs. The methodology used for this follow-up will likely be an extended individual case study per student participant. This change in methodology may be necessary because by this point, the focus of the research will be on the individual, rather than SA 101. It is worth noting that this is merely speculation at this point, as it may largely depend on how many students are interested in participating in the follow-up at that point.

There is also value in replicating this study utilizing a different case site. As Stake (1995) detailed, case study research is not meant to be generalizable, but rather, "our first obligation is to understand this one case" (p. 4). Exploring courses similar to SA 101 in different contexts could provide further insights. For instance, there may be merit in conducting a similar study at an institution different than Century University. In this way, we may understand the prevalence of such coursework, as well as greater awareness of the similarities and differences of these interventions. In addition, given the influence of COVID-19 on this particular iteration of SA 101, there may be value in repeating this study during a semester not influenced by a global pandemic.

Finally, this research provides important insights to higher education professionals, supervisors, student affairs graduate program faculty, current undergraduate students, and many others. This is due to the connection between career development and persistence and attrition in a given profession. As was described in Chapter 2, there continues to be study of and concern for attrition within the field of student affairs professionals, particularly for those with less than five years of service. This study contributes to the body of literature and research surrounding attrition in the field. It does so by way of understanding career development for aspiring student affairs professionals with particular emphasis on how we socialize, expose, and expectation-check with our young professionals to ensure they make informed career decisions. SA 101, therefore, is in some ways an early intervention for those interested in the student affairs profession. It may mean some individuals are more committed to the field, while it may also cause some individuals to reconsider their decision to pursue student affairs. While interventions such as SA 101 may decrease the incoming rates of student affairs graduate students, it could assist with retention rates post-graduate school if interventions such as SA 101 are more prevalent and successful in helping individuals in their career development and discernment process. Further research connecting these two ideas must be prioritized if we are to truly address this problem head-on.

Strengths and Limitations of this Study

As with all research, this study has both strengths and limitations. This section discusses the strengths of the present study, as well as the limitations I have identified. Neither the strengths, nor the limitations should be considered exhaustive; however, I believe this section highlights the important strengths and limitations for readers to consider as they review this case study research.

Strengths

A qualitative study finds strength in the rich voice, thorough descriptions, and context provided to illuminate the topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This study was no exception. The data collected yielded a body of rich, extensive data to understand SA 101 as this study's case in question. In many ways, this study fulfilled Stake's (1995) description of case study research. Stake (1995) proposed that "we do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case" (p. 4). By virtue of studying one, single case, I collected a robust web of data to inform the conclusions of this study. As a result of this thoroughness, the data connected well to SCCT frameworks. That is, the study demonstrated how SA 101 assisted students in working through the Lent et al.'s (1994) model of career choice.

The study also found strength in the representative sample of student participants. Participants represented demographics similar to the makeup of Century University, as well as the student affairs profession as a whole. Among the students, there was diversity in commitment levels to the idea of student affairs as a future profession, as well as in gender, class year, backgrounds, and more.

A final strength worth highlighting for this study was the concurrent analysis of the results of this study. Concurrent analysis provided me the ability to “cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 70). This allowed me the opportunity to ensure each data collection method informed the other methods. For instance, concurrent collection and analysis of class assignments assisted in the interview process by providing additional context and questions for the participant. The concurrent analytic approach afforded triangulate and trustworthiness in this study as well.

Limitations

As with any study, there were several noteworthy limitations of this research. The limitations mentioned in Chapter 1 provides an overview of the general limitations, including limitations posed by the data collection methods. For example, utilizing document analysis and classroom observation could yield biased data and influence the findings for this study. This study relied heavily on interviews of the students and instructors of SA 101. It is possible interview questions may have been misconstrued or misinterpreted, learning to inaccurate or inarticulate findings. Some would also argue there are limitations in case study research design, arguing an opposing viewpoint to the one shared in the strengths section above. According to Stake (1995), “qualitative inquiry is subjective” and “often, we need a long time to come to understand what is going on” (pp. 45-46).

Above all other limitations, the COVID-19 pandemic limited data collection techniques and also influenced the data itself. The rise of the pandemic forced changes in the planned data collection techniques. For example, the final interview and the final classroom observation were both meant to be performed in-person but were changed to be conducted over Zoom. I do not believe these changes in methodology altered the data; however, I do believe the pandemic itself influenced the data, the experiences of the students and instructors, and certainly impacted the learning experience of the course overall.

COVID-19 greatly altered the lives of the participants in this study, both inside and outside of the SA 101 context. In their final interviews, Carrie shared that "life did an absolute 180" and Elizabeth said that "everything has changed." The students and instructors were thrust into a new normal. Many students returned to their homes to finish the year, and the instructors were pushed into a work-from-home environment. Some of the students lost their on-campus jobs, including Caleb who picked up overnight shifts at his hometown grocery store to make up for lost income. Lauren was able to keep her job on campus and work online as a tutor. Most students had access to reliable internet, but not all. For some, the internet was spotty, which made class attendance and assignment submission more challenging. According to the instructors, one student said she was living with a friend and did not have Wi-Fi, so she went to the laundromat to access Wi-Fi since all the libraries were closed. Given these new realities, students reported having a harder time concentrating in an online/remote environment. COVID-19 represented a significant change to participants' environment and experience, and influenced this study in both direct and indirect ways.

Several participants in the study described COVID's influence on the course. The instructors recalled pairing down the course, thereby limiting the learning experiences. Ann shared that, for the most part, class discussion was lost when the course was forced to go online. Students noticed a difference too. Elizabeth felt the pandemic "lessened the learning experience." She cited that the instructors combined classes and just could not reproduce the discussion the way it was when the class was in-person. "It just wasn't the same interaction." As a result, it is impossible to know how similar or different the findings of this study compare to an offering of SA 101 without the presence and influence of a global pandemic.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the findings of this research study. Specific attention was placed on engaging these findings with the existing literature. The study's contributions and advancements to theory, practice, and the field of higher education were also highlighted. The chapter concluded with recommendations for future research, as well as a brief assessment of the study's overall strengths and limitations.

Prior to this study, there was little empirical research on undergraduate student affairs courses and no understanding of how such coursework influenced career development. Given the challenges faced across higher education and specifically with respect to attrition within the field of student affairs, this study aimed to further understand the unique role of SA 101 on the career development of aspiring student affairs practitioners. The study presented and conducted in this dissertation specifically highlighted the linkages between SA 101 and career development using social cognitive career theory. The results indicate SA 101 influenced career development through growth in self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations. This study demonstrated that career interests form when people "view themselves to be efficacious and in which they anticipate positive outcomes" (Lent et al., 1994, p. 89). These items, in turn, allowed for informed career interest exploration and decision making.

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Appendix A: Qualtrics Demographic Information Form for Students

Page 1: The Role of Undergraduate Student Affairs Coursework in Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals' Career Development

Thank you for your interest and participation!

This study seeks to examine the role of undergraduate student affairs coursework in aspiring student affairs professionals' career development. The results of this study will hopefully improve future undergraduate student affairs courses and shed light on the career development among aspiring student affairs professionals.

Page 2: Consent to Participate

IRB #: 19869

Study Title: The Role of Undergraduate Student Affairs Coursework in Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals' Career Development

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to examine the role an undergraduate introductory student affairs course plays in the career development of students interested in student affairs as a possible career. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. You have been invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as someone who is in an undergraduate student affairs course.

Procedures:
You will be asked to complete a short online demographic information form and three 60 minute, audio-recorded interviews with the researcher over the course of the semester at dates/times convenient to you. The researcher will also ask participants to submit select assignments for review. In addition, the researcher will conduct observations of the classroom environment three times during the semester. Following the course's completion, the researcher will seek to schedule a follow-up interview three years after the completion of course with each student participant.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to you as a research participant other than the opportunity to reflect on your experiences. This study will be beneficial to you indirectly because the results of this study will help inform educational efforts designed to promote the field of student affairs to undergraduate students.

Compensation:
Participants who complete all three interviews over the course of the semester and submit select assignments for review will be compensated with a $30.00 Amazon gift card at the completion of the final interview.

Risks and/or Discomforts:
There are no known risks associated with this research.

Confidentiality:
Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in a password protected computer or locked cabinet in the primary investigator's office and will only be seen by the research team. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported through use of a chosen pseudonym and the name of your institution will also be given an alias.

Your Rights as a Research Subject:
You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s):

Matt Nelson, Primary Investigator
Dr. Elizabeth Niehaus, Secondary Investigator
Email: mjnelson373@gmail.com
Phone: (402) 350-0776

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

- Phone: 1(402)472-6965
- Email: irb@unl.edu

Freedom to Withdraw:
You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw') at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator, with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, <the host institution>, and will have no bearing on your grade for <class name>.You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Consent to Participate:
You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By clicking on the I Agree button below, your consent to participate is implied. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

- I agree.
- I do not agree.

Page 3: Interest in Student Affairs Career
This study will examine the role an undergraduate introductory student affairs course plays in the career development of students interested in student affairs as a possible career. To get a sense for your interest in the field of student affairs, please answer the following question:

How likely are you to pursue a career in student affairs? (Select one)
5-Definitely will
4-More than likely will
3-Undecided
2-More than likely will not
1-Definitely will not

Page 4: Demographics

First Name: (text box entry)
Last Name: (text box entry)
Date of Birth: (text box entry)
Email: (text box entry)
Cell Phone: (text box entry)
Preferred Method to Schedule Interviews: Call, Text, Email (drop down selection one)
Race/Ethnicity: (text box entry)
Gender: (text box entry)
Pronouns: (text box entry)

To protect your privacy, please provide a pseudonym that the research team can refer to you by throughout the data collection and analysis process.
(text box entry)

Submit Form Button

Page 5: Form Complete!

Thank you for completing this short demographic information form. You can exit the browser at any time. The research team will be in contact shortly! If you have questions, please contact the researchers:
Matt Nelson, Primary Investigator
Dr. Elizabeth Niehaus, Secondary Investigator
Email: mjnelson373@gmail.com
Phone: (402) 350-0776

Appendix B: Qualtrics Demographic Information Form for Instructors

Page 1: The Role of Undergraduate Student Affairs Coursework in Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals' Career Development

Thank you for your interest and participation!

This study seeks to examine the role of undergraduate student affairs coursework in aspiring student affairs professionals' career development. The results of this study will hopefully improve future undergraduate student affairs courses and shed light on the career development among aspiring student affairs professionals.

Page 2: Consent to Participate

IRB Project #: 19869

Study Title: The Role of Undergraduate Student Affairs Coursework in Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals' Career Development

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to examine the role an undergraduate introductory student affairs course plays in the career development of students interested in student affairs as a possible career. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. You have been invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as an instructor of an undergraduate student affairs course.

Procedures:
You will be asked to complete a short online demographic information form, two 60 minute, audio-recorded interviews with the researcher over the course of the semester at dates/times convenient to you. The researcher will conduct observations of the classroom environment three times during the semester.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to you as a research participant other than the opportunity to reflect on your experiences. This study will be beneficial to you indirectly because the results of this study will help inform educational efforts designed to promote the field of student affairs to undergraduate students.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participation in this research.

Risks and/or Discomforts:
There are no known risks associated with this research.

Confidentiality:
Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in a password protected computer or locked cabinet in the primary investigator's office and will only be seen by the research team. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported through use of a chosen pseudonym and the name of your institution will also be given an alias.

Your Rights as a Research Subject:
You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s):

Matt Nelson, Primary Investigator
Dr. Elizabeth Niehaus, Secondary Investigator
Email: mjnelson373@gmail.com
Phone: (402) 350-0776

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

- Phone: 1(402)472-6965
- Email: irb@unl.edu

Freedom to Withdraw:
You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw') at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator, with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or with <the host institution>. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Consent to Participate:
You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By clicking on the I Agree button below, your consent to participate is implied. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

- I agree.
- I do not agree.

Page 3: Demographics

First Name: (text box entry)
Last Name: (text box entry)
Date of Birth: (text box entry)
Email: (text box entry)
Cell Phone: (text box entry)
Preferred Method to Schedule Interviews: Call, Text, Email (drop down selection one)
Race/Ethnicity: (text box entry)
Gender: (text box entry)
Pronouns: (text box entry)

To protect your privacy, please provide a pseudonym that the research team can refer to you by throughout the data collection and analysis process.

(text box entry)

Submit Form Button

Page 4: Form Complete!
Thank you for completing this short demographic information form. You can exit the browser at any time. The research team will be in contact shortly! If you have questions, please contact the researchers:
Matt Nelson, Primary Investigator
Dr. Elizabeth Niehaus, Secondary Investigator
Email: mjnelson373@gmail.com
Phone: (402) 350-0776

Appendix C: Observational Protocol

- Date of Observation
- Start Time
- End Time
- Location
- Researcher name
- Outline/flow of the class session
- Messages conveyed vs. student reactions
- Hmm… (Items that make the researcher pause)
- Physical Space
    - How is the room set-up? Draw a picture of the space.
    - Who is present? List the names and roles of each.
    - Where are each situated in the room? Draw these folks into the picture.
    - (For subsequent observations: are students sitting in the same general area as they were before?)
- Descriptive notes of what is happening in the class. Based on Merriam and Tisdell (2016), consider:
    - Activities and interactions – participant interactions with instructors, other students and the topic of interest, what is said, is it well-explained, length of activity, materials used
    - Conversations – who talks and when, who initiates, drivers of conversation, who is not talking, note silences, nonverbals, technology use
    - Subtle factors – informal /unplanned activities, symbolic or context-specific comments, expressions, non-verbal (eye contact, direction of attention), bodily behaviors
    - Researcher's behavior – how is my presence influencing the participants, the activities, or conversations?

Protocol developed using the structures discussed by Creswell and Poth (2018) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016)

Appendix D: Protocol for Instructor Interview #1

To start: Greeting – include name of interviewer, chosen pseudonym of participant, purpose of the study, length of interview, and that it will be audio-recorded

1. What is your role on campus?
2. How long have you been teaching this course?
3. What do you see as the purpose of this course?
4. Within this course, what topical areas will be taught – and why?
5. What expectations or learning outcomes do you have for those enrolled in the course?
6. How did you arrive at decisions on how you would facilitate learning of the concepts for the course?
7. What role did you have in the development of the syllabus, the class sessions, and the assignments?
8. What competencies does a student affairs professional need to possess?
    a. How are those competencies infused or discussed in the course materials, discussions, or assignments?
9. Tell me more about…(specific questions on the syllabus – on course sessions and assignments)
    a. How do you decide/break down the team teaching responsibilities?
    b. Could you confirm the day/time/location of the class?

    c. Knowing the purpose of this study, which class sessions and which assignments do you perceive as the most reflective for students, specifically in regards to their career discernment?

10. With respect to this semester's section of the course, how many people are in the class? What do you know about the students enrolled in the course?
    a. How do students hear about this course?
    b. What might be their motivations for enrolling?
11. In your opinion, does this course contribute to students' career development?
    a. If yes, what part or parts of the course specifically contribute to student career development? How?
        i. Can you provide an example?
12. Based on your experience, does this class contribute to:
    a. A change in student self-efficacy as it relates to career decision-making?
    b. A change in student expectations as it relates to pursuing a career in student affairs?
13. What percentage of students in this class do you suppose will ultimately pursue a career in student affairs?
14. Additional questions may be infused in order to clarify items from the syllabus in relation to course session topics and assignments

Appendix E: Protocol for Instructor Interview #2

To start: Greeting – include name of interviewer, chosen pseudonym of participant, purpose of the study, length of interview, and that it will be audio-recorded

1. How has your life changed since last time we chatted with respect to all the modifications made due to COVID?
2. How did the semester go?
3. Talk to me about the transition from in-person to online delivery of this course. How do you think this influenced your students' learning and take-aways from the course?
4. With moving to an online delivery format:
    a. Did you see a change in participation rates? Is participation part of the grade?
    b. Attendance?
    c. Was there any modification with the grading scheme?
    d. In not having in-person class, did you see an up-tick of use/needing to use eLearning - Blackboard?
5. Technical Zoom questions:
    a. Did all of your students have access to Zoom, to internet, to class?
    b. To your knowledge, were there side-chats/private messages in the Zoom chat function?
    c. Did you opt to record the Zoom sessions? Why or why not?
6. What elements of the course were successful? What elements did not go as planned?
7. When we spoke at the beginning of the semester, you mentioned that one of your goals for the course was ____________. To what extent do you believe the

students in the class, as a whole, met your expectations or learning outcomes for this course?

8. When we spoke at the beginning of the semester, you mentioned that you felt student affairs professionals needed to be competent in ____________. Do you still feel this is true? How were these competencies infused or discussed in the course materials, discussions, or assignments?
9. In your opinion, did this course contribute to students' career development?
    a. If yes, how? What part or parts of the course specifically contributed to student career development?
        i. Can you provide an example? (i.e. a change in self-efficacy as it relates to career decision making, a change in student expectations as it relates to actually having a job in this field)
    b. If not, why?
10. Of the students in the class this semester, do you have concerns about any of their future success in the field of student affairs? If so, please discuss which student(s) and the specifics of your concern.
11. When we last spoke, you felt that about _____ percent of students in this class would ultimately pursue a career in student affairs. Do you still agree with your assessment? Why or why not?

Appendix F: Protocol for Student Interview #1

To start: Greeting – include name of interviewer, chosen pseudonym of participant, purpose of the study, length of interview, and that it will be audio-recorded

1. How did you find out about this class?
2. Why are you taking this course?
3. What do you hope to learn as a result of taking in this course?
4. How much effort and time do you expect to invest in this course?
    a. What have you heard from other students who have taken this course in the past? Anything about the rigor or helpfulness of the course?
    b. What grade do you expect to receive in this course?
5. How important is this course to you?
6. This course focuses on exploring the student affairs profession. In your own words, what is the student affairs profession?
7. How do you think this class may contribute to your understanding of student affairs – if at all?
8. How did you learn about student affairs as a possible career?
9. In the short online form you completed, you indicated that you ___________ pursue a career in student affairs. Can you tell me more about why you said ___________?
    a. What elements of the profession are most attractive to you? Least attractive?

b. What barriers might prevent you from entering the student affairs profession?

c. Do you feel you have enough information to make a decision based on what you know now? Why or why not?

10. To be a successful student affairs profession, what knowledge or skills does a person need to possess?
11. You share that a successful student affairs professional knows/is skilled at ___________. Do you feel that you possess these skills? Tell me more.

    a. If not, how might you grow in these areas?
12. Some say we pursue careers where we see alignment of our personal values. What is important to you in a career? What is important to you in your personal life?

    a. How does a career in student affairs align with that is important to your career and your life?
13. If you entered the field of student affairs, do you think you'd be successful in your role? Are there any factors that may prevent you from being successful?

Appendix G: Protocol for Student Interview #2

To start: Greeting – include name of interviewer, chosen pseudonym of participant, purpose of the study, length of interview, and that it will be audio-recorded

1. How is the class going so far?
2. What has been the most meaningful part of the class so far?
3. Are you glad you enrolled in this course? Why or why not?
4. What have you learned in this class so far?
5. In what ways are your peers contributing to your learning? Your instructor?
6. Talk to me about the atmosphere of the class.
7. Do folks participate? Same people? Do you? Are folks talking with each other or more just talking aloud at the instructor?
8. What type of teaching do your instructors use in this class? Lecture, activities, discussions, etc.
9. I’ve observed two class sessions so far. Would you say class is fairly "normal" when I’m around - or does my presence change anything about the class?
10. When we last spoke, you shared that you expected to exercise ___________ amounts of time and effort in this class. How true is this from your perspective today?
    a. What grade do you expect to receive in this course?
11. Previously, you shared this class was/wasn’t important to you. Is this still the case? Why or why not?

12. When we last spoke, we talked about your interest in pursuing a career in student affairs. You shared you were _________________ interested. Has this course changed that in any way?
    a. How confident are you in your decision? What has helped/hurt your confidence levels?
    b. Do you feel you have enough information to make a decision about pursuing a career in student affairs based on what you know now? Why or why not?
    c. In our past conversation, you shared that _____________ might prevent you from entering the field of student affairs. Is this still the case? Have you identified any additional barriers to entry into this profession?
13. Based on what you know now, what knowledge or skills does a person need to possess to be a successful student affairs professional?
14. You share that a successful student affairs professional knows/is skilled at _______________. Do you feel that you possess these skills? Tell me more.
    a. If not, how might you grow in these areas?
15. The professional competency self-assessment had six items. Which do you feel is the most important for student affairs professionals? How is this course contributing to your growth in this area?
    a. Other questions (i.e. ones to clarify or corroborate with an observation or assignment submission)

Appendix H: Protocol for Student Interview #3

To start: Greeting – include name of interviewer, chosen pseudonym of participant, purpose of the study, length of interview, and that it will be audio-recorded

1. How has your life changed since last time we chatted with respect to all the modifications made due to COVID?
2. Now that we're at the end of the semester, tell me how the course went.
3. Talk to me about the transition from in-person to online delivery of this course. How did this influence your learning experience?
4. Technical Zoom questions: did you have access to Zoom, to internet, to class?
5. Were there side-chats/private messages in the Zoom chat function?
6. In not having in-person class, did you see an up-tick of use/needing to use eLearning/Blackboard?
7. At the beginning of this course, you shared you expected to exercise _________ amounts of time and effort in this class. You did/didn't revise this statement when we met last. Now that you're at the end of the course, how much effort and time did you devote to this course?
8. Imagine I'm a friend of yours and I'm considering taking this course in the future. What would you share with me about the course? Would you recommend it? Why or why not?
9. Reflecting on the semester as a whole, how important was this course to you?
10. Previously, you shared you expected to receive a _____ (grade) in this class. Is this still the case?

11. What did you learn as a result of taking this course?
    a. Look at answer from first interview (Q3). How similar or different is this than what you had mentioned in your first interview?
12. This course focused on exploring the student affairs profession. At the start of the semester, you described student affairs as ____________________. Does this still hold true? What, if any, modifications would you make to this definition.
13. How did this class contribute to your understanding of student affairs – if at all?
14. How did your functional unit presentation turn-out? You thought this would be a pretty important assignment to advance your knowledge of Student Affairs. What were your main take-aways? (For Karina: ask about nerves)
15. To be a successful student affairs professional, what knowledge or skills does a person need to possess?
16. You share that a successful student affairs professional knows/is skilled at _______________. Do you feel that you possess these skills? Tell me more.
    a. If not, how might you grow in these areas?
17. How does a career in student affairs align with what is important to your career and your life?
18. At the beginning of the semester, you indicated that you ____________ pursue a career in student affairs. At our second interview, you shared this **had/hadn't** changed. How would you answer this question now?
    a. If a change was made: What caused this change?
    b. If a change was not made: What do you make of that?
19. Do you plan to pursue a career in student affairs? Why or why not?

20. Did this course assist you with this decision? If so, how?
21. What elements of the profession are most attractive to you? Least attractive?
22. Do you feel you have enough information to make a decision about pursuing a career in student affairs based on what you know now? Why or why not?
23. In our past conversation, you shared that _____________ might prevent you from entering the field of student affairs. Is this still the case? Have you identified any additional barriers to entry into this profession?
    a. How likely is it that these barriers will prevent you from pursuing this profession?
24. If you entered the field of student affairs, do you think you'd be successful in your role? Are there any factors that may prevent you from being successful?
25. How did your peers contribute to your learning? The instructor?
26. Would you be willing to permit me to keep your information on file for a possible follow-up study in three years? What would be the best email to reach you in the future that you'll still have access to?

Appendix I: Coding Scheme

Key

- **Value (V)**: "importance we attribute to ourselves, another person, thing, or idea" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75)
- **Attitude (A)**: "way we think and feel about oneself, another person, thing, or idea" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75)
- **Belief (B)**: "Part of system that includes values and attitudes, plus personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 75)

Provisional Codes

- A: Pre-conceived (negative) notions of the field
- A: Pre-conceived (positive) notions of the field
- B: How they heard about the field/profession/this course
- V: Desire to improve campus life (Hunter, 1992)
- A: Uncertainty with other professions (Hunter, 1992)
- B: Development of academic/career interests (Lent & Brown, 1996)
- B: Personal/Professional interests promote career choices (Lent & Brown, 1996)
- A: Performance/persistence (Lent & Brown, 1996)
- V: Alignment of personal/professional values (Hunter, 1992; Lent et al., 1994)
- V: Alignment of personal/professional goals (Hunter, 1992; Lent et al., 1994)
- V: Alignment of personal abilities (Lent et al., 1994)
- B: Learning experiences influence on career interests (Lent et al., 2003)